

Vision Plan

Illustrations in this section and the following District Framework section present realistic scenarios for the types, magnitudes and locations of potential building development and redevelopment over the next 10 to 15 years. Related improvements in streets and parks are also included. The illustrations should not be interpreted as prescriptions for specific locations, but rather as windows into possibilities, and guides to quality and character. The plan's framework sections on walkable development, green space, transportation, Downtown business plan and districts provide a set of policy guidelines for private development, but leave considerable flexibility for new projects to respond to unique market opportunities, locations, and the entrepreneurial thinking of individual developers, property owners, businesses, and other Downtown investors.

The vision scenario rests on analysis of market-based Downtown development potential, described in more detail below. It also reflects the unique opportunities offered by nine catalyst sites, also described in more detail below. The catalyst sites are publicly owned parcels and thus offer a higher level of control over the private development and public infrastructure improvements made there. Catalyst site descriptions indicate how they can be used most strategically to advance the overall goals of the master plan.

MARKET-BASED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Analyses of residential, office, retail, and hotel market demand in the study area were undertaken by nationally-recognized specialists as described in Chapter 2, New Era of Opportunity. Residential market analysis predicted demand over the coming 5 to 7 years, and the office and hotel analysis predicted demand for the coming 10 years. Retail analysis focused on the most viable categories of market opportunity, as well as retail recruitment and management strategy, but did not quantify potential retail development.

As this vision looks ahead to a longer time frame of up to 20 years, we have projected a continuation of market-based development opportunity at levels similar to those predicted for the next 5 to 7 and 10 years. These projections lack the tested methodology that determined the nearer-term predictions, but they represent reasonable and even conservative scenarios of demand continuing in the patterns that will drive nearer-term demand.

It is reasonable to assume that longer-term residential demand could continue at a similar or greater level than in the near term because the demographic trends forming the basis for predicted demand are expected to continue for the next 15 to 20 years. Market analyst Laurie Volk's experience shows that demand for walkable housing environments tends to accelerate over time. Because office development increasingly follows its target workforce, it is reasonable to assume that a growing

number of young professionals living in and near Downtown would help keep Downtown a desirable office location. Downtown should also continue to provide a solid market for hotel development as its amenities and accessibility to visitors improve, and as convention center and office development expand. Brookings Institution and University of Michigan real estate economist Christopher Leinberger anticipates the success of dense, walkable, mixed-use centers will increase demand further, based on an expanding appreciation for the quality and value of such centers, and on the continued decline in the proportion of households with children, which will approach 14% over the next 20 years.

Exhibit 5-2 summarizes projections for market-based housing, office and hotel development over the next 10–15 years. Retail development projections reflect approximate ground-floor building area available in priority retail locations. The development magnitudes in the table correspond to the potential building footprints shown in the illustrative vision plan on page 6.5.

ILLUSTRATIVE VISION PLAN

The illustrative vision plan applies projected market-based development opportunity to potential Downtown sites for redevelopment and new development. Several elements guide the placement of development in this scenario:

- **The master plan framework sections.** For instance, most development is located to reinforce walkable development focus areas and their central walking and transit corridors. Concentrations of development are also located to help reinforce the emergence of Downtown districts as distinct places.
- **Privately-owned sites with apparent redevelopment opportunity.** Existing buildings with historic or other value that yet remain vacant today were targeted with new market-based uses that fit their design, configuration, and location. Existing parking lots and other sites without buildings or with buildings of apparently low value were targeted as sites for new buildings. In some cases, ongoing conversations with property owners during

the master plan process informed development scenarios. This development is all speculative, however; investments are ultimately at the discretion of individual property owners.

- **Catalyst sites.** Nine catalyst sites, described in further detail on the following pages, contain

EXHIBIT 5-2

Summary of projected development

USE	MARKET OPPORTUNITY	POTENTIAL SCENARIO
Housing	1,500 units (1.5 x 1,000 units in 5-7 years)	1,500–1,600 units (30% in rehabbed office or industrial buildings)
Retail	Focused in and around existing/expanded areas of concentration and walkability	125,000sf–175,000sf in targeted locations and niches
Office	220,000–480,000sf new class A space (greater walkability enables greater amounts)	400,000sf–480,000sf in 6-8 new buildings
Hotel	250-400 rooms in 2-3 hotels	350–475 rooms (one full-service hotel with convention center link; two smaller hotels, including Fairfield Inn)

combinations of market-based development, public parking, public parks and/or other investments that can have a beneficial effect on new development opportunities and the values of existing properties. These development scenarios reflect general recommendations for each site that are intended to facilitate the master plan vision, but they are subject to modification as specific projects are designed for each site.

District Framework

INTRODUCTION

The Master Plan outlines approximately 15 unique districts that work together to form Downtown. It is important to understand these districts as interdependent places that overlap one another to form a strong whole, rather than autonomous places with clear boundaries. The districts' important characteristics are their centers of place and identity, not their edges.

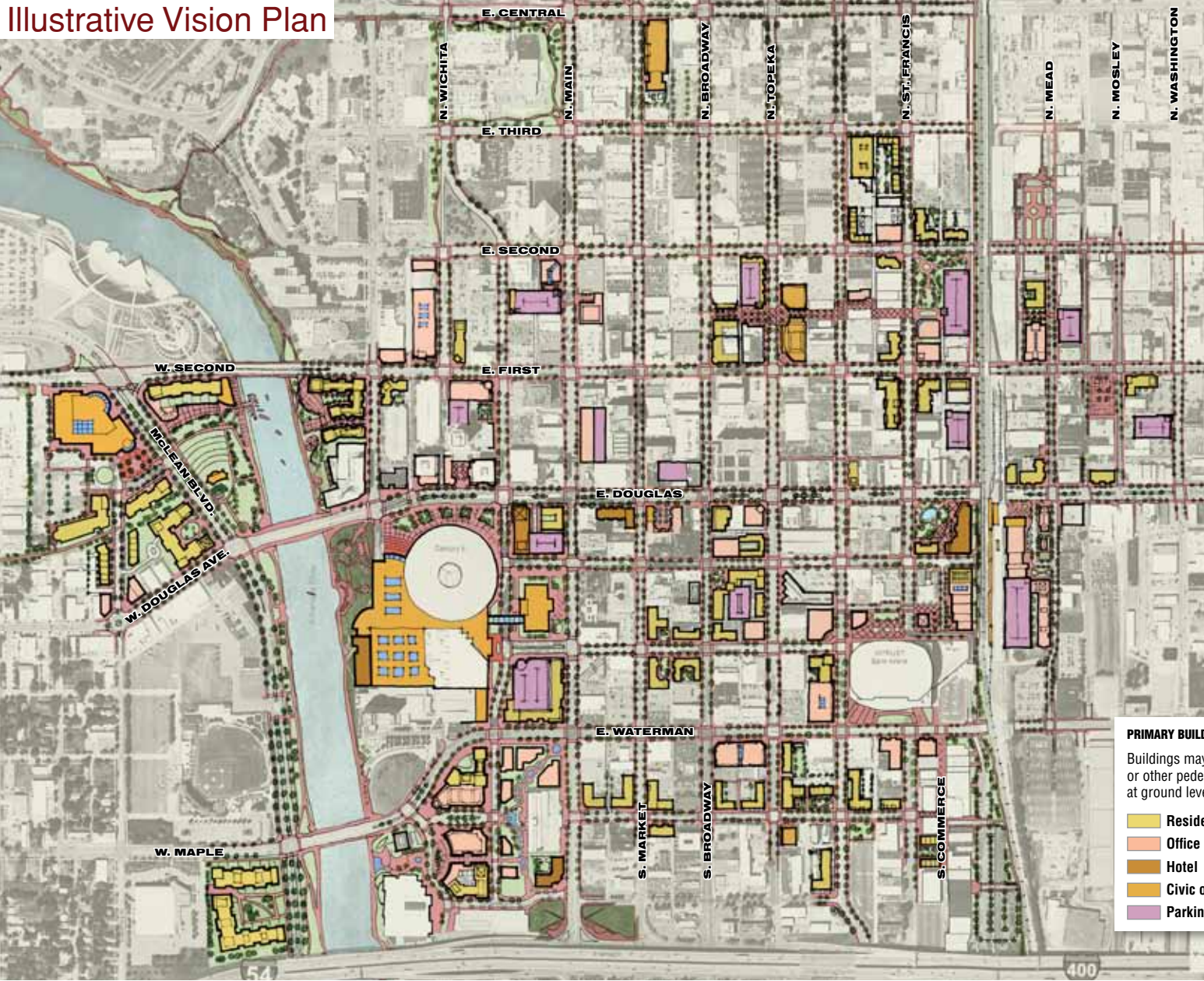
Generally, all the districts should incorporate a diverse mix of land uses, though some that are more predominantly residential in character might be more appropriately termed neighborhoods. Thinking about Downtown as being made up of recognizable component districts or neighborhoods is important for several reasons:

- Different areas have unique existing conditions of access, physical features, development history, land ownership patterns, adjacent land uses, and other factors that significantly affect potential development opportunities, challenges and character.
- These unique conditions mean that different districts will reflect different translations of the Vision Principles in their development. Some may fulfill certain principles more than they do others, but collectively all the districts should work together to fulfill all the principles.

- Most development opportunities in the study area are geared to walkable, mixed-use settings that depend on relatively dense concentrations of development activity in specific places that may be only a block or two in diameter—much smaller than the overall study area.
- Unique identity—cater to niche development markets, which is where Downtown's predominant opportunities are. Also reinforce sense of place and community by drawing together kindred spirits to live and work among each other. And by highlighting unique, attractive features of their physical context, such as the Arkansas River or concentrations of historic buildings.

Districts can help direct development phasing in ways that maximize the benefit of development at every stage. Development will unfold over years in pace with market absorption. While property owners and developers will have significant discretion in the timing and location of development around Downtown, new walkable mixed-use development will benefit from being concentrated in certain areas to establish “critical mass” of place, activity and infrastructure. Districts centered around walkable focus areas suggest the prime areas to direct this critical mass.

Illustrative Vision Plan



- PRIMARY BUILDING USE**
- Buildings may also include retail or other pedestrian-oriented uses at ground level.
- Residential
 - Office or retail
 - Hotel
 - Civic or Institutional
 - Parking

Arkansas River

The region's signature destination for cultural and recreational activities, distinguished by world-class architecture and the daily presence of Downtown residents and workers



District Overview

People in Wichita consistently point to the Arkansas River (and the Little Arkansas) as its most distinguishing feature. Native American settlements around the rivers' confluence, and later the rivers' role in determining the route of the Chisholm Trail, placed Wichita where it is. Today, Downtown's location on the river makes Wichita a "river city" in a grand tradition of other river cities like St. Louis, Louisville, Chattanooga, and Baton Rouge.

Wichita's impressive collection of cultural institutions (the Museums on the River, Keeper of the Plains, Exploration Place, and the planned new Central Library) and sports venues (Lawrence-Dumont Stadium and the Ice Arena) as

well as events like Riverfest regularly draw people to celebrate the river setting. Still, the river offers much more untapped potential as a center of community life, identity and prosperity. The Arkansas River District and its own "string of pearls"—prominent community destinations—should capture this potential through a focus on key themes:

Key Themes

- **Attract people to the riverfront daily with a**

mix of nearby uses. It isn't enough to bring people to the river corridor occasionally for sports events, museum visits and festivals. Many people should be present to enjoy the river setting throughout the day and week. A greater mix of activities, with better access and view connections to the river, would accomplish this. Existing development along the river—Exploration Place, the Broadview Hotel, Century II, and WaterWalk—should improve these connections through their architecture and activities. Ongoing renovation of the Hyatt, which is re-orienting dining spaces and lobbies toward the river, and renovation of the Broadview, which will add park landscaping, provide excellent models and momentum. New development opportunities, such as the lot at First and Waco streets,

WaterWalk, and the planned new library, offer an important opportunity to introduce a significant amount of housing along the river, promoting its emergence as another distinctive Downtown residential neighborhood. These sites could include river-oriented restaurants as well. Recreation activities should also draw more people as described below.

- **Reinforce the museum/river “String of Pearls” destination district.** The collection of cultural and sports institutions along river Downtown is the richest in Kansas—a destination for visitors from around the state and beyond, an important attraction for people moving to Wichita, and a daily amenity for people in and near Wichita. These institutions, while successful, would benefit from a higher profile that attracts more visitors more frequently. Actions that would help this include reinforcing joint branding and advertising of the existing Museums on the River group and other String of Pearls destinations, improving access with better walking and transit connections, and continuing the tradition of landmark architecture through the design of the new Central Library.
- **Enable more recreation on and along the river.** Modest improvements in river corridor access and facilities could take better advantage of existing park infrastructure, dramatically expanding the district’s potential as a community park and recreation destination. Improve and add pedestrian connections to riverfront paths at

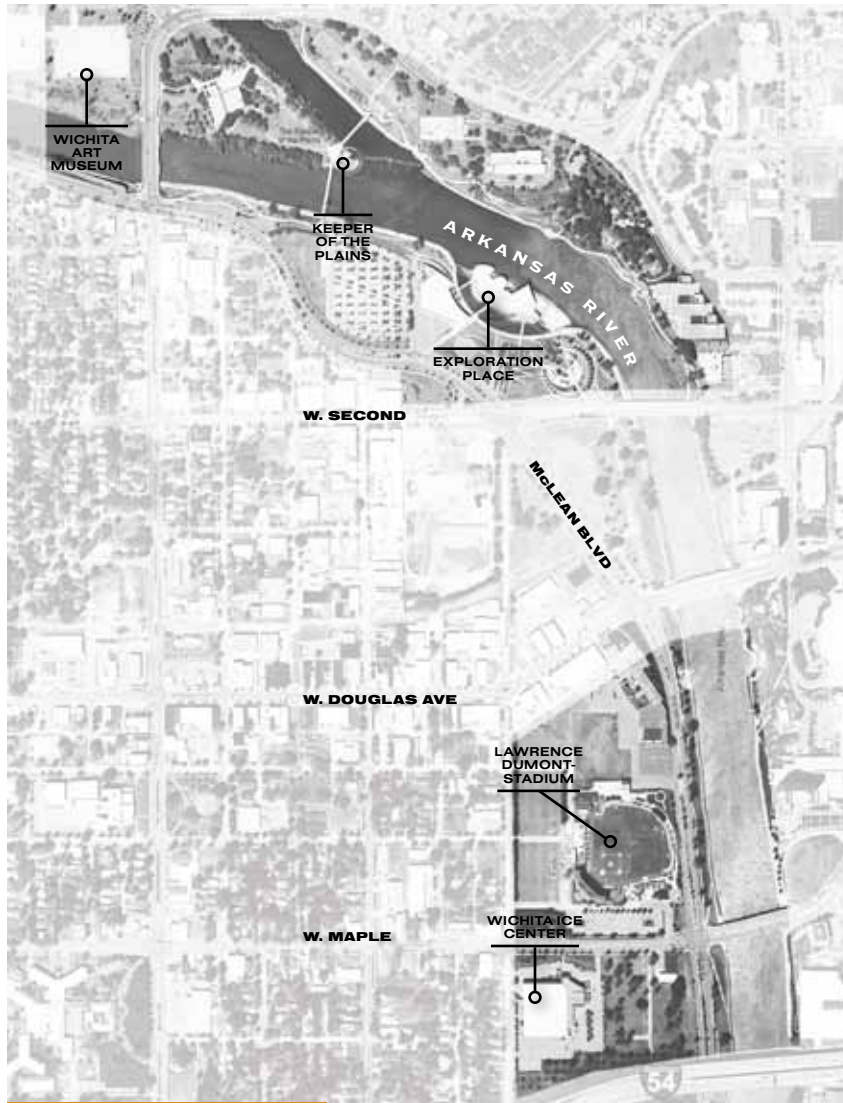
The Opportunity in The District



Today



Opportunity: This precedent from Chattanooga, Tennessee, connects people to the Tennessee River with generous stairs, seating, and fountains. An adjacent aquarium, museums, housing, restaurant district, recreational path, and boating facilities keep this place active with locals and visitors throughout the day and week.



existing conditions

locations like First Street, Douglas Avenue, and other places identified in the diagram on the facing page. The community's tradition of boating on the river—today sustained by the WSU crew team but few others—should be re-established by creating a boathouse on the river that can provide needed new facilities for WSU crew as well as public boat rentals. Periodic excursion boats and/or water taxis during public events would further expand public opportunity to enjoy being on the water. A bike rental facility, potentially combined with the public boat facility, would enable more people to take advantage of the river's long and beautiful recreational paths. Continue to host public concerts, festivals and other events in park areas along the river to reinforce its importance as a regional community destination. Ongoing introduction of shrubs and other plantings along the river edge, and removal of debris, should be continued to help control the goose population and create a more inviting setting for people.

Additional recommendations on engaging the river are provided below in discussion of the Douglas/River, Core and Century II/ WaterWalk Districts.

community vision

Relocation of the Kansas African American Museum at the river reinforces the "String of Pearls" concept, strengthening the river's appeal as a destination.

Improving and adding pedestrian connections to riverfront paths dramatically expands the district's potential as a community park and recreation destination.

W. SECOND

McLEAN BLVD

W. DOUGLAS AVE

W. MAPLE

New housing takes advantage of river views and amenities

Douglas Corridor at Arkansas River/Delano

Two segments along Wichita's postcard avenue:

- > River: Downtown's window onto the Arkansas River, energized by active residents, visitors and the river itself.
- > Delano: Delano's entrepreneurial main street.



District Overview

The point where the Douglas Avenue Corridor crosses the Arkansas offers a special opportunity to link the distinctive, expansive river landscape with the intensive mix of activities along Wichita's signature street. Enhancing both the river corridor and the Douglas corridor as grand public rooms framed by attractive buildings and animated 24/7 by the activities around them, will make this the region's most memorable and exciting place.

This area is framed by two important centers of activity. Delano's Douglas corridor has been reemerging steadily as a center of neighborhood retail and community thanks to committed business and property owners and residents. The area around Century II, the Broadview Hotel and the Garvey Center includes a valuable mix of uses—offices, housing, restaurants, performing arts, and the convention center—that brings growing numbers of people to the area each day. In between, underutilized parks and streets and vacant development sites offer the opportunity to create an active river-oriented neighborhood that connects and reinforces

The Opportunity in The District

Downtown to both banks of the river. Key themes—shared with other portions of Douglas but tailored to the specific contexts of the river and Delano—should guide development and public realm improvements in the Douglas-River and Douglas-Delano districts:

Key Themes

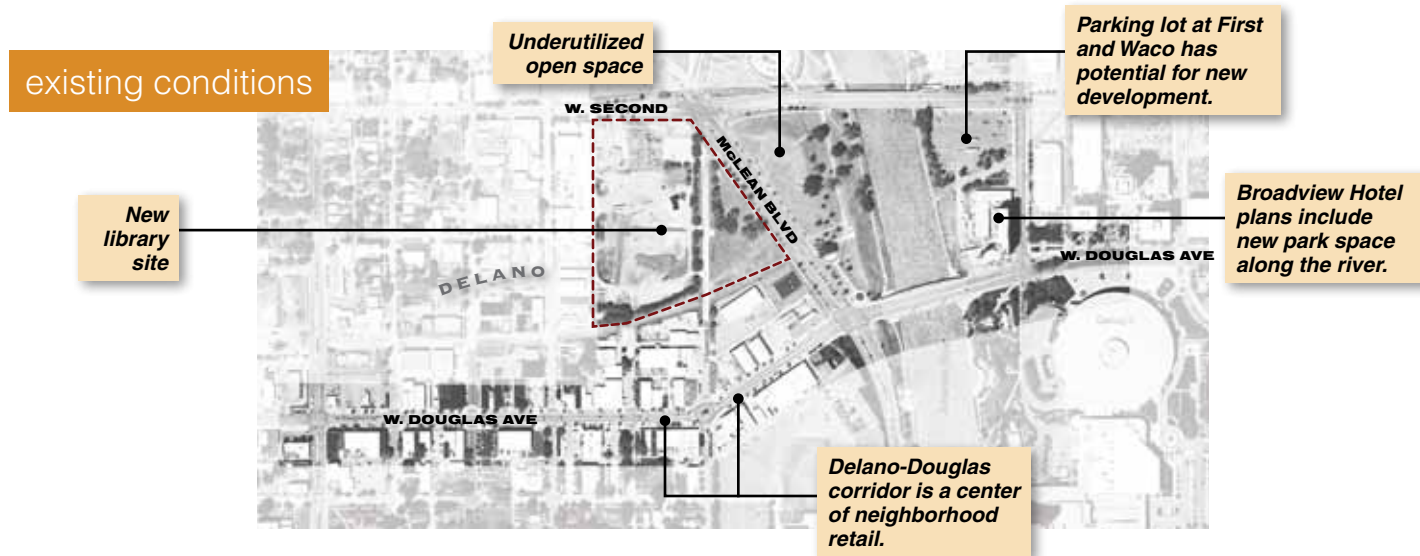
- **Create continuous walkability with appropriate development and infrastructure.** Design new mixed-use development on vacant sites to create delightful places to walk across the river on both the Douglas and the First-Second Street bridges, along the river's recreational paths, and along adjacent streets like Waco, McLean, and Sycamore. Modify Century II so that it invites people who have come for conventions and performances to see and walk along the river and Douglas Avenue. Design the new Central Library—and complementary uses, including public plazas, housing, restaurants and recreation facilities—to connect the river and Delano with active, inviting walks and streets. The rehabilitation of the Broadview Hotel with new lobby and restaurant connections to the river via new park space sets a perfect example.
- **Mix housing with other uses.** New housing offers the most significant opportunity for market-driven development in this area, and would do more than other uses to bring it to life by creating a riverfront neighborhood that would stay active throughout the day and evening. But other current and future uses should also be included to make this a still more active center of



Today, the river edge is distinctive but underused.



Opportunity: New housing and restaurants integrated with public access to the river edge—such as shown here in San Antonio (upper image) and Vancouver (lower)—can bring the Douglas-River district to life.



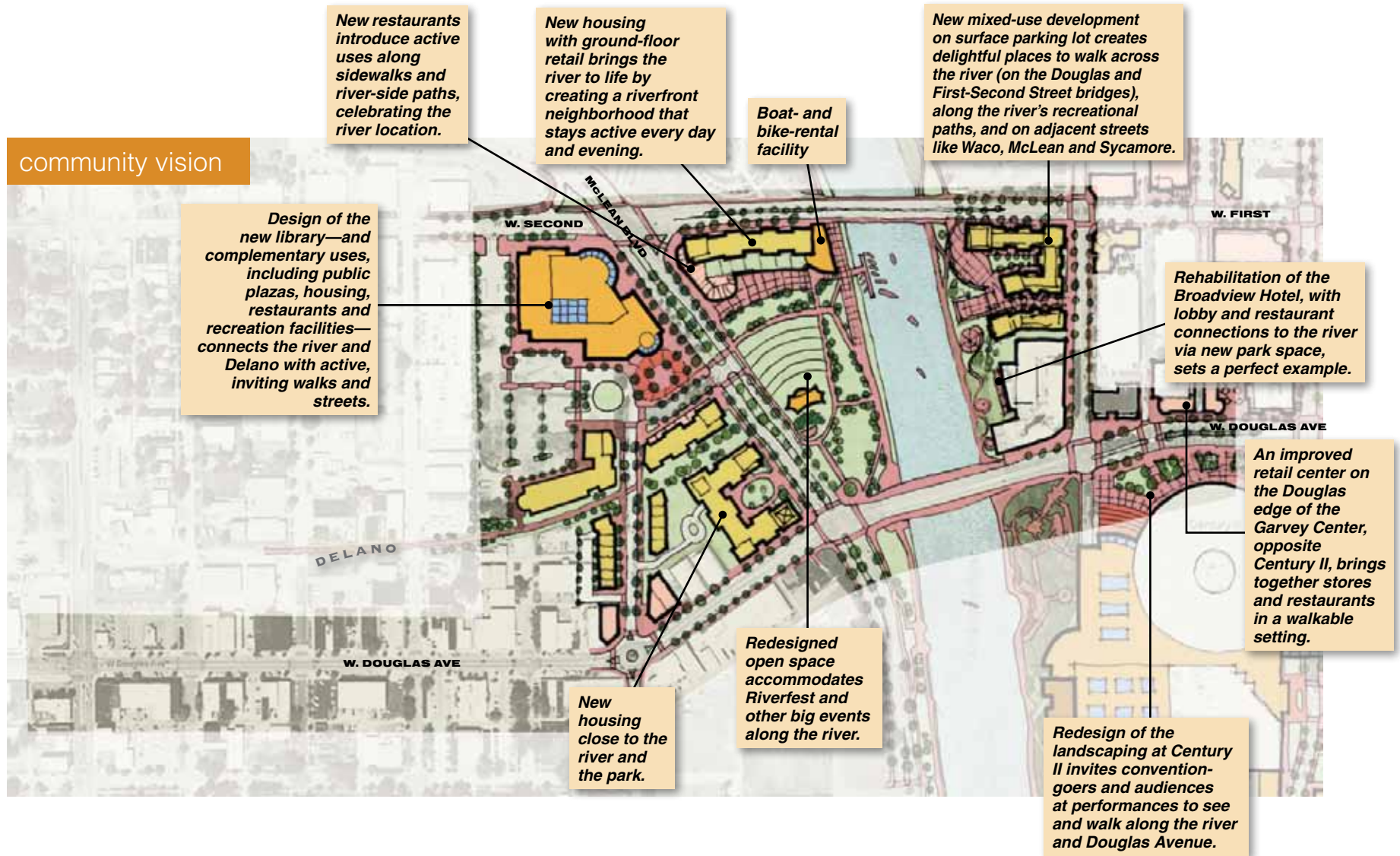
community and economic activity: continued hotel and convention center presence, offices, restaurants, and public facilities like the library and a boat and bike rental facility. New housing in this area would likely be most successful once other portions of Downtown like Old Town West and the Douglas Core become more established as residential neighborhoods.

- **Increase retail as market allows and supplement it with other active ground-floor uses.** The Douglas-River corridor is a more challenging location for retail than established Downtown retail concentrations like Douglas-Delano and Old Town. Restaurants likely represent the best market opportunity to introduce new active uses along sidewalks and river-edge paths, and can also truly celebrate the river location. New stores and restaurants will succeed best if clustered in walkable settings—such as an improved retail center at the Garvey Center’s Douglas edge opposite Century II. Where retail or restaurants are

not economically viable, encourage other active ground-floor uses. The new library, convention center activities, the Broadview Hotel, and a new recreation facility should be programmed and designed to enhance and benefit from walkability at their respective locations.

- **Focus transit services along the corridor to allow easy access and interchange.** Douglas-River and Douglas-Delano are a long walk from existing centers of activity like Old Town and the INTRUST Bank Arena. Improved transit connections along Douglas would enable many more people who live, work and visit elsewhere in Downtown to reach the river and Delano regularly—and leave more space and funding for parks and buildings instead of parking. Likewise, transit would represent an important amenity for residents of Delano and new riverfront buildings, connecting them to other Downtown destinations.

community vision



Douglas Corridor at Core/Historic District

Two segments along Wichita's postcard avenue:

- > Historic: Old Town's front door, where its revival began, and where its vitality and character flow into the city.
- > Core: Downtown's center of activity, where rich history and an ambitious future overlap.



District Overview

Reinvestment in the East Douglas Avenue Historic Landmark District encompassing Naftzger Park, the Eaton Hotel and Union Station sparked the beginning of Downtown's renaissance in the 1980s. It continues as one of Downtown's

most active places, mixing restaurants, housing, office space and other uses. The opening of the INTRUST Bank Arena on one side, and continued strength of Old Town on the other, sets this area up for a new round of reinvestment and activity that will bring its remaining empty and underutilized sites to life.

The corridor as it moves west from Emporia to Water streets has much less activity. Some office and retail businesses do well here, but the corridor is clearly not the center of business and shopping it once was, and it cannot rely solely on these uses as its economic basis in the future. Many buildings are occupied, but

their uses tend to be oriented to auto access and do little to make Douglas walkable. Some prominent vacant lots and storefronts further interrupt walkability. Some landmark historic office buildings sit empty because they lack the floor layouts or parking that today's office tenants want.

The ongoing Exchange Place project signals a very appropriate approach to reinvigorating this corridor by recasting it as a residential neighborhood *as well as* a place for business and retail. New housing can be a very effective reinvestment strategy here for a number of reasons:

- There is market demand for housing in the area.
- A concentration of new residents will keep people in the area evenings and weekends, which will help support retail and restaurants in the area.
- Housing makes good, economically sustainable use of older office buildings that no longer perform well as offices.
- Adaptive reuse of historic buildings for housing can tap historic tax credits, an important resource for development financing.

Housing, however, cannot effectively turn empty storefronts into places that restore Douglas as a great place to walk. Ground-floor spaces need to be filled with other uses—retail where possible, and arts, education or other pedestrian-oriented uses everywhere else—as amenities that reinforce the corridor’s current role as a business location and attract further investment as a residential setting.

Key Themes

- **Continuous walkability with appropriate development and infrastructure.** Encourage new investment in housing, office, retail, hotel and other uses that benefit from walkable access and the proximity to Downtown’s many amenities. Complement existing public art and street trees with interpretive signage and more plantings. Make crosswalks more visually prominent to make it easier to walk.

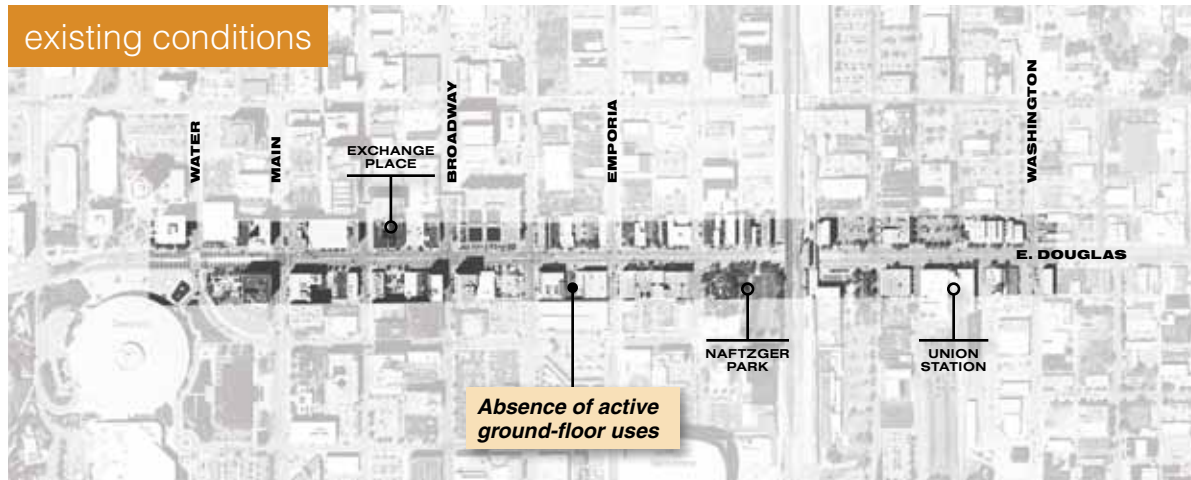
The Opportunity in The District



Today: Douglas gradually turned from a place designed for people to a place designed mainly for cars, with blank storefronts and difficult pedestrian crossings.



Opportunity: Tryon Street in Charlotte, North Carolina, is inviting for pedestrians because it feels comfortable and safe. This makes its buildings inviting for a broad range of office, retail, housing, hotel and civic activities for which there is value to locating in a walkable setting.

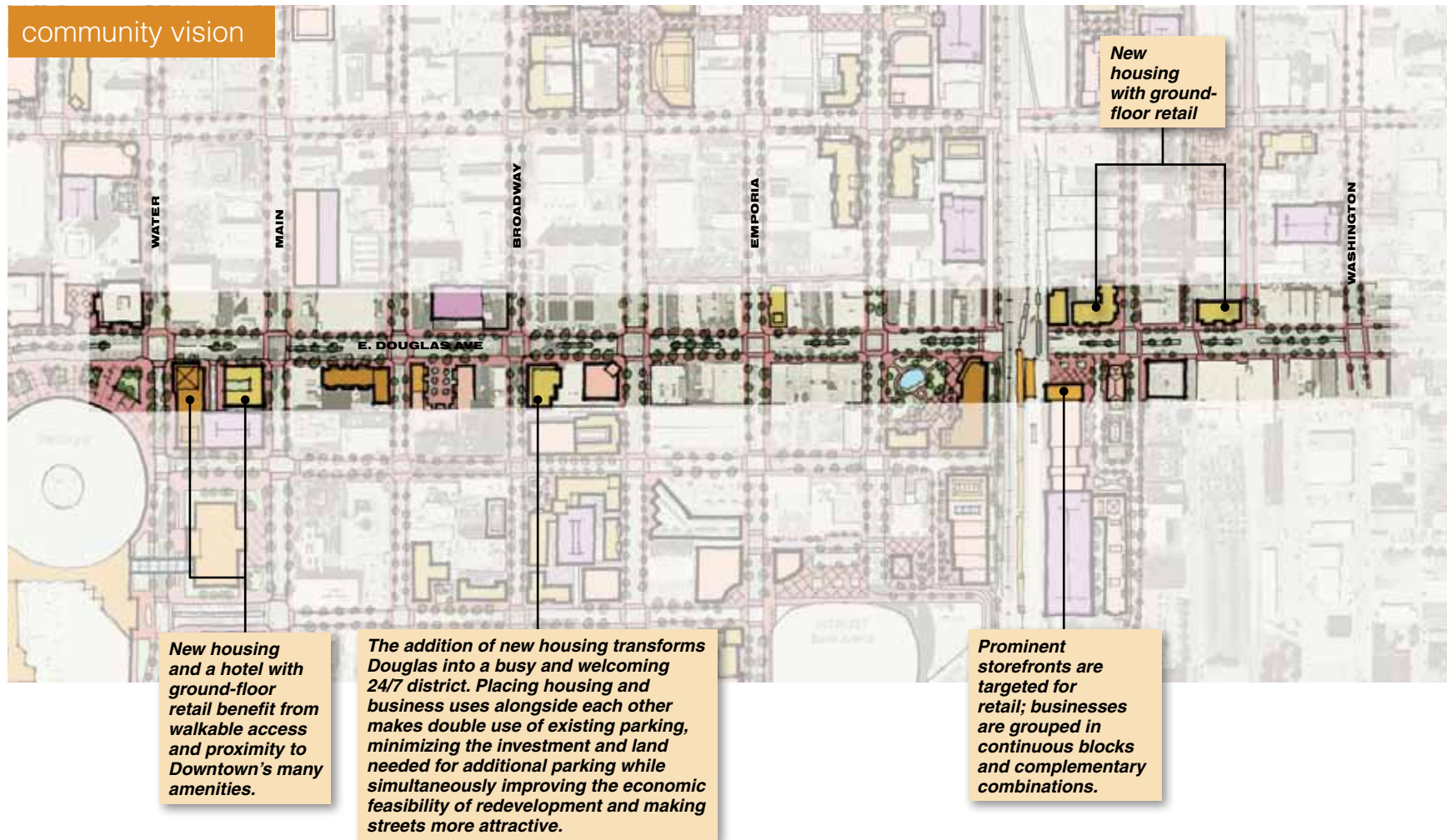


- **Mix housing with other uses.** Adding residents is important to transforming Douglas from a 9-to-5 office district to one that is busy and welcoming 24/7. Placing housing and business uses amidst each other makes double use of existing parking spaces to minimize the dollars and land needed for additional parking. It improves the economic feasibility of redevelopment, creates more attractive streets, and buttresses retail viability by providing customers days, evenings, and weekends.
- **Increase retail as the market allows; supplement it with other active ground-floor uses.** Target prominent storefronts for retail; group stores to create continuous blocks and compatible retail clusters. Seek arts, education and other uses where retail is not currently economically viable. Avoid ground-floor housing. Although residential stoops and windows can play an important role in enhancing walkability along other Downtown streets in mixed-use and predominantly residential settings, as

Downtown's premier street, Douglas should maintain a continuous theme of storefronts with stores and other active ground-floor uses. Live-work spaces should similarly be avoided along Douglas, as they may revert to ground-floor residential use over time.

- **Focus transit services along corridor to allow easy access and interchange.** Make Douglas Wichita's premiere transit street—as it was when streetcars fostered its original development pattern a century ago and more. Frequent, convenient transit access around Downtown will reinforce this as Downtown's crossroads—with convenient access to and from all the activities Downtown offers. Good transit will reduce parking needs, further improving economic viability of development.

community vision



Old Town

The thriving center for dining, shopping, living, working and nightlife, energizing Downtown and the region.



District Overview

Old Town is the prime example of the community benefits and economic growth that can grow from a walkable mixed-use district Downtown. The gradual restoration and adaptive reuse of its historic buildings over the past 30 years has

taken advantage of their design appeal for a variety of uses, including offices, housing, hotels, restaurants, and stores. New buildings, following design guidelines that ensure they fit in with the character of their older context, have been introduced to fill gaps and accommodate additional uses.

Old Town has demonstrated that concentrating a mix of activities in a walkable district creates energy and builds momentum—attracting still more activity and investment. After establishing an engineering facility here that employs 200 people, Airbus added 80 more positions during the Downtown master planning process because its managers saw that having restaurants, stores, and housing nearby created a setting that attracted the types of workers the company most needs. Many other businesses, including ones in creative fields like architecture and publishing, also call Old Town home.

Now a true community destination, Old Town is the only spot in the region where you can walk among a variety of fine restaurants and choose one after you get there. The residents of Wichita and the surrounding region have come to consider Old Town Square a genuine place of community, one where people gather spontaneously as well as for planned events. The City Arts facility and the museums in Old Town reinforce its appeal as a frequent destination for both residents and tourists. In fact, the success of two major hotels in Old Town owes much to the vibrancy and choices on offer in this urban neighborhood.

But Old Town can do more. Remaining parking lots here could accommodate more development through greater shared use of existing parking, introduction of more transit service, and additional parking structures. New development in Old Town can take advantage of the important public investments already made in parking, environmental cleanup, and existing arts and entertainment destinations to further reinforce the district's vibrancy and economic value.

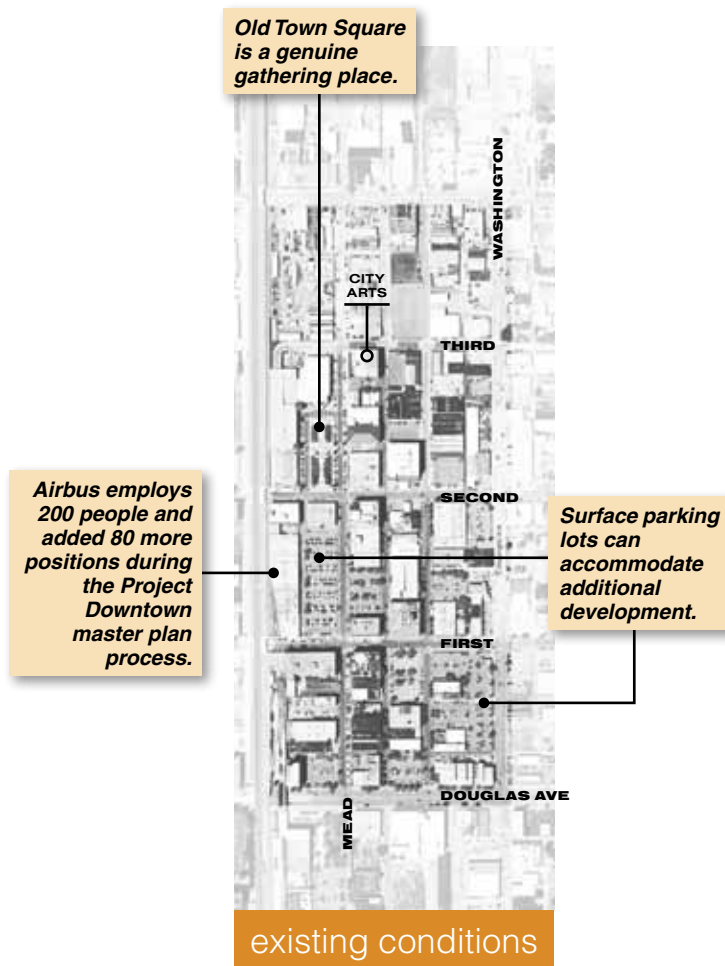
The Opportunity in The District



Today: Despite substantial reinvestment in housing and businesses in Old Town, parking lots and blank walls still interrupt the district's activity and walkability.



Opportunity: There is still significant opportunity for more infill development to transform Old Town's remaining parking lots into places full of people, bringing more of its streets to life more of the time.



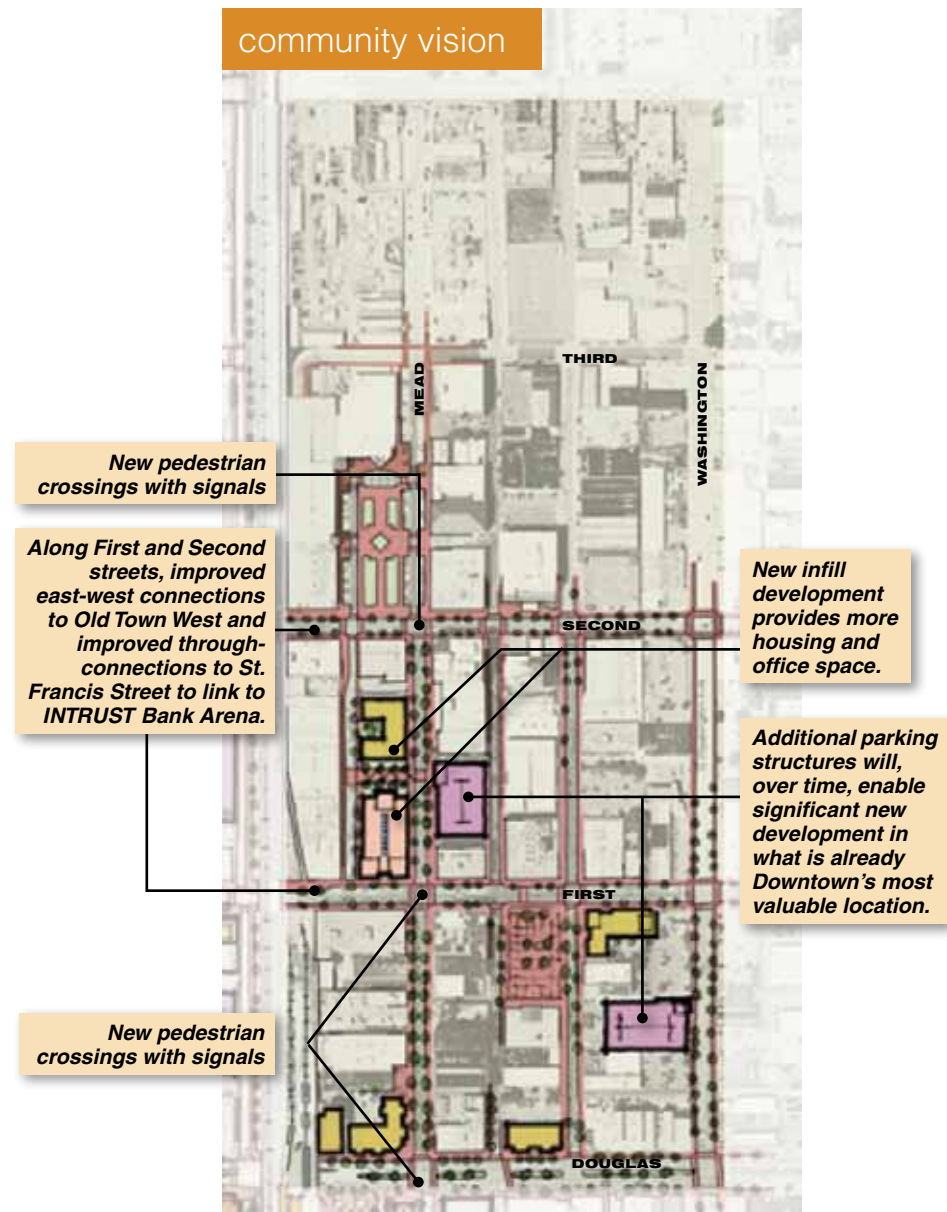
At its edges, Old Town has the ability to push its vibrancy into other parts of Downtown. Intensified development along Douglas turn it from a broad traffic barrier to a seam that connects Union Station and the Old Town South district. Infill development and walkability improvements along Douglas and First and Second streets will extend redevelopment opportunities along these corridors under the railroad to the Arena and Old Town West districts—both already seeing development interest sparked by the proximity of Old Town’s amenities and jobs as well as the Arena.

Key Themes

- **Create infill development opportunities with more structured parking and improved walking, transit and bike access.** Old Town’s existing parking district has worked well to share public parking spaces among a number of uses that need them at different times—making the most of public investment and freeing up land for development instead of parking. One or two additional parking structures would, over time, support significant additional development in this most valuable of Downtown locations.
- **Strengthen the Douglas Avenue edge and links to Union Station and the INTRUST Bank Arena.** Install a signaled pedestrian crossing at Mead—the nearest signaled crossings at Washington and St. Francis require inconvenient detours, and drivers passing under the railroad overpass don’t have a clear view of the unsignaled Mead crosswalk. Reducing traffic lanes from six to four and adding parallel parking will shorten the pedestrian crossing distance, add parking for businesses, and keep traffic speeds moderate. Ensure new development has a

walkable scale and ground-floor uses that are visible and accessible to pedestrians. Prioritize infill development on city-owned parking lots—made possible by new structured parking that continues to accommodate the needs of existing businesses while expanding the capacity for new ones. Enhance the streetscape with more street trees, decorative plantings and public art as part of an effort to improve the Douglas streetscape throughout Downtown.

- **Improve First and Second streets east-west connections to Old Town West, the INTRUST Bank Arena (via St. Francis), and the First Street “String of Pearls” corridor.** Old Town’s restaurants, retail and other amenities can support more development, and additional development activity nearby means more economic support for existing and new stores and restaurants. Encourage more retail, restaurants and/or other pedestrian-oriented uses along First and Second streets in Old Town to make these corridors more walkable and lively. Add traffic signals for pedestrian crossings and turning vehicles where Mead crosses First and Second streets to improve circulation convenience and safety.
- **Add frequent, convenient transit along the Douglas Avenue corridor and Second Street, linking Old Town to and from all of Downtown’s destinations.** (Also provide transit service on First Street as long as it remains a one-way pair with Second Street) This will strengthen Old Town’s accessibility, activity and economic value at the same time it gives an important boost to reinvestment elsewhere in Downtown.



Old Town West

New buildings complement historic ones in this central place for living, business, nightlife and the performing arts.



District Overview

New bridges where the railroad crosses First and Second streets have dramatically opened possibilities for Old Town's successful redevelopment to spill across the railroad corridor into Old Town West. The parking lots and half-empty industrial and commercial buildings that dominate much of the district today represent opportunities for development of new buildings and rehabilitation of older ones with new market-driven uses. No project confirms Downtown's appeal as a place to live better than the renovation of the former Wichita High School on Emporia Street as Flats 324, with 68 apartments. These apartments rented rapidly when they came on the market in spring 2010 in the midst of the worst

economic conditions in years. Although Flats 324 sits on a lonely block amid parking lots, its easy five-minute walk to Old Town Square and Douglas Avenue has proven to be an important selling point, one that can fuel more reinvestment throughout the district. Office development is equally desirable in Old Town West, to accommodate market interest in Old Town's amenities, keep the neighborhood active by day, and make the most of parking capacity.

The former Coleman factory at St. Francis and Second streets could play a very significant role in redeveloping Old Town West, given its prominent location at the corner of streets linking Old Town Square and

INTRUST Bank Arena. The box on page 6.25 describes how this site could contribute to the emergence of Old Town West.

Walkable development should have top priority along St. Francis. The street is a natural walking route between Old Town Square and the arena; has buildings suitable for adaptive reuse; has several vacant lots and other buildings suitable for new development; and links north to the Renaissance Square neighborhood. It also takes advantage of the Coleman factory store and museum as a destination. Ongoing City investment in reconfiguring St. Francis as a two-way street with on-street parking and trees will make it a much more accessible and attractive address for residences and businesses, including restaurants and entertainment.

Old Town West can also reinforce the First Street “String of Pearls” concept—particularly by supporting the idea of introducing a performing arts district along First Street between the Orpheum Theatre and Old Town Square. Should investment in one or more additional performing arts facilities prove feasible, several sites along First Street could provide suitable locations. Locate any new facilities on existing blocks to maintain important connections along the existing street grid. With or without new facilities, walkability between the Orpheum and Old Town Square should be improved with better street trees, crosswalks, and infill development along First, Second and St. Francis streets. A mid-block pedestrian walk running east-west between First and Second Streets is also recommended to reduce the long north-south distance of these blocks and link to potential park and parking facilities on the former Coleman factory site.

Key Themes

- **Encourage new housing throughout the district.** Flats 324 demonstrated that housing development can be very successful in Old Town West, even in locations that feel somewhat isolated today. This gives developers flexibility to introduce more housing wherever appropriate sites are available. As time goes on, this will help the area evolve into a genuine neighborhood. Adding one or more neighborhood parks would be especially valuable in making new housing more marketable and building a sense of neighborhood community and identity. Park space could potentially be added on the Coleman site and/or on portions of development sites.

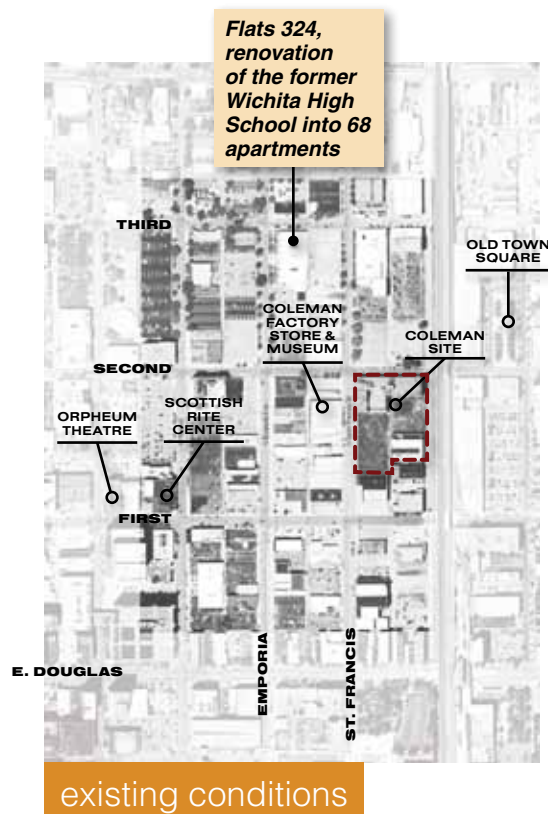
The Opportunity in The District



Today: St. Francis Street offers a lonely, treeless walk to the INTRUST Bank Arena visible in the distance.



Opportunity: A mix of new housing, office, stores and restaurant/entertainment development in new and rehabilitated buildings can turn the streets of Old Town West into vibrant, walkable links to Downtown districts on all sides.



- **Focus on walkability and retail along St. Francis to link with Douglas Avenue and Arena.** St. Francis should become Old Town West's premier street—a principal walking corridor supporting retail and restaurants, easily accessible by car and transit without being overwhelmed by them. The City's current

investments in street reconstruction should be followed by active efforts to encourage reinvestment on the Coleman factory site (see below) and other parcels.

- **Leverage the important Coleman site.** The City should work cooperatively with the County, WDDC, adjacent property owners and partner developers to make the most of the Coleman site as a catalyst for further activity and development. Large and visible, it should ideally include public park space, public parking *and* new development. These elements can add value to surrounding new development, justifying and supporting efforts to remedy the site's environmental challenges as much as possible. The Second Street edge deserves special focus for attractive new development and/or streetcape elements like public art, trees and banners, as an important gateway into Downtown from Old Town Square, Washington Avenue and other neighborhoods and highways to the east.
- **Nurture First Street's Performing Arts District.** Improve walkability and sense of place along First Street and connecting streets to reinforce the presence of the Orpheum Theatre and Scottish Rite Center as major arts venues. Support the additional performing arts venues, if feasible, with new walking connections, shared-use public parking, and a park or plaza.

community vision

New housing is welcome throughout the district.

Second Street receives special focus for attractive new development and/or streetcape elements—public art, trees and banners—in light of its role as an important gateway into Downtown from Old Town Square, Washington Avenue, and other neighborhoods and highways to the east.

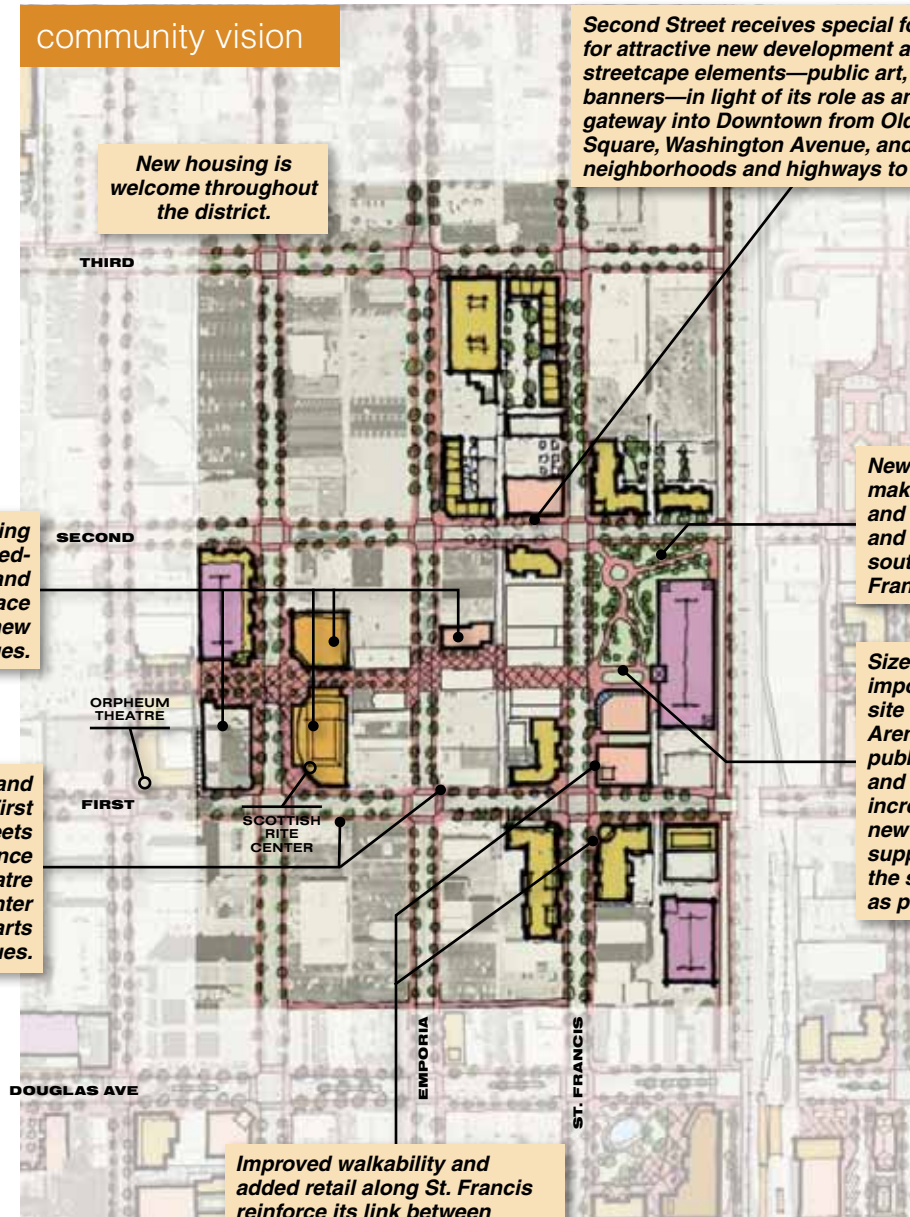
Additional walking connections, shared-use public parking and park or plaza space support existing and new performing arts venues.

Improved walkability and sense of place along First and connecting streets reinforces the presence of the Orpheum Theatre and Scottish Rite Center as major Downtown arts venues.

New neighborhood park helps make housing more marketable and build a sense of community and neighborhood identity. The southeast corner of Second and St. Francis is a priority park location.

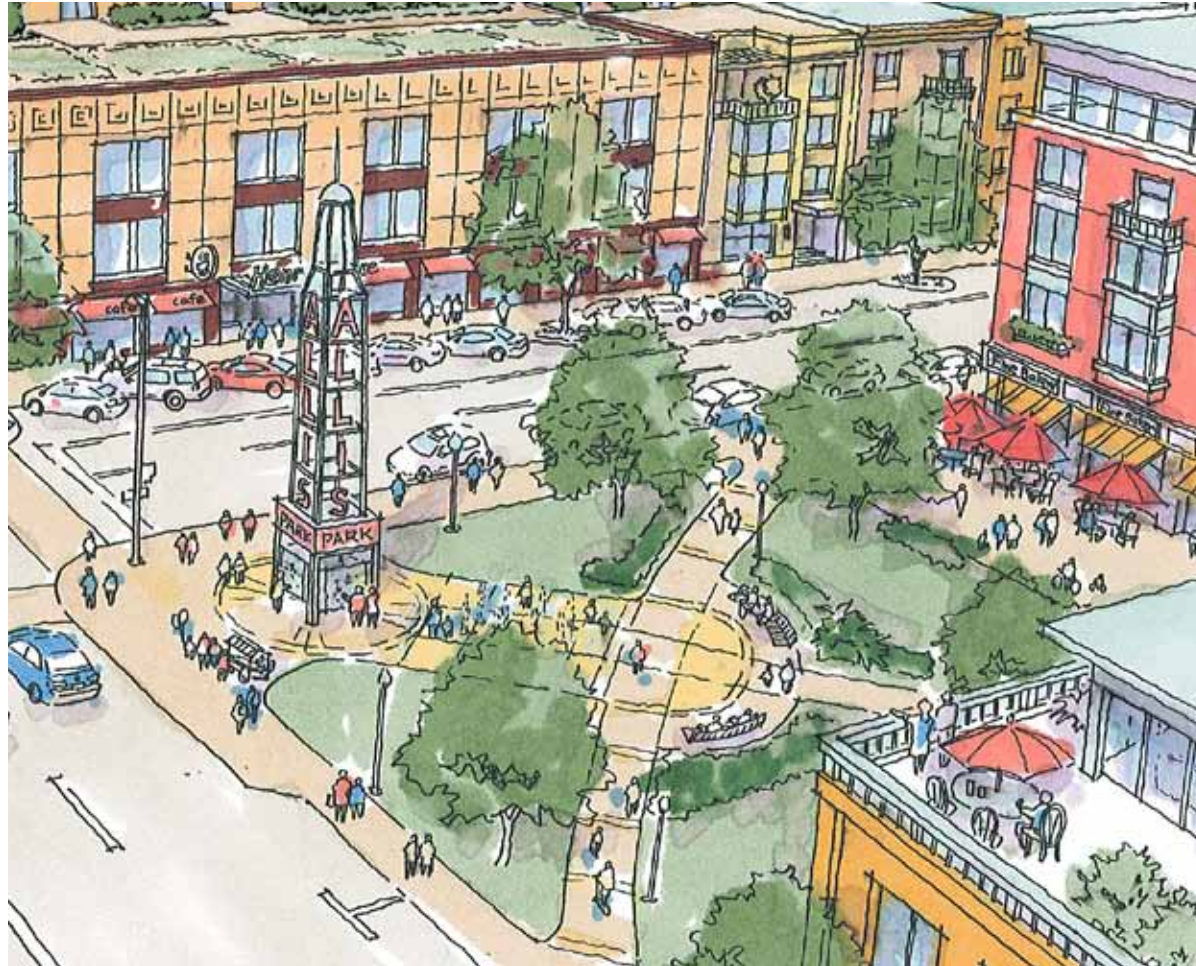
Size and visibility underscore the importance of linking the Coleman site to Old Town and INTRUST Bank Arena. Redevelopment includes public park space, public parking, and new buildings. These elements increase the value of surrounding new development, justifying and supporting as much remediation of the site's environmental challenges as possible.

Improved walkability and added retail along St. Francis reinforce its link between Douglas Avenue and the Arena.



Arena

Destination arena events and a thriving residential neighborhood together sustain retail, entertainment and dining options that are unmatched in the region.



Downtown master plan advances these concepts with a more concrete analysis of market-based development opportunity and the action steps needed to foster private development investment. Note that the Arena District in this

District Overview

The *Arena Neighborhood Redevelopment Plan* set an important foundation for this area with its vision of quality mixed-use development on a network of walkable streets. The Project

report corresponds to the William/English Street District in the *Arena Neighborhood Redevelopment Plan*; other areas in that plan are treated here as part of the Douglas and Main corridors and the Commerce Street Arts District.

Housing, offices, and hotels should be encouraged throughout the district to keep all streets active throughout the day and week and capture a broad range of market-based development interest. This departs slightly from the *Arena Neighborhood Redevelopment Plan*, which recommended solely commercial/office and civic uses along William Street. Given the prominent role housing played in the analysis of Downtown market opportunities, however, and the momentum that the Exchange Place project has given to the emergence of a residential neighborhood along Douglas, this plan endorses housing as an appropriate and valuable use along William.

Retail, restaurant, and entertainment uses are desirable where they can be concentrated on walkable street blocks and plazas. William Street and the portions of Emporia, St. Francis, English, and Waterman that lie within a block of the Arena offer the strongest locations for concentrations of stores and entertainment venues. Extensive retail—such as along the full length of William—is not likely in the near term, nor does it make sense as a goal, given this plan’s higher priority of focusing retail along Douglas Avenue. The most appropriate area for a near-term focus on developing retail lies in the blocks between the Arena and Douglas, taking advantage of Arena-generated demand and reinforcing a continuous retail environment between the Arena, Douglas and Old Town. Sites adjoining Naftzger Park, historic structures along Commerce Street like the former Spaghetti Works building, and publicly-owned parking lots adjacent to the Arena all offer good potential locations for these uses in the near and medium terms.

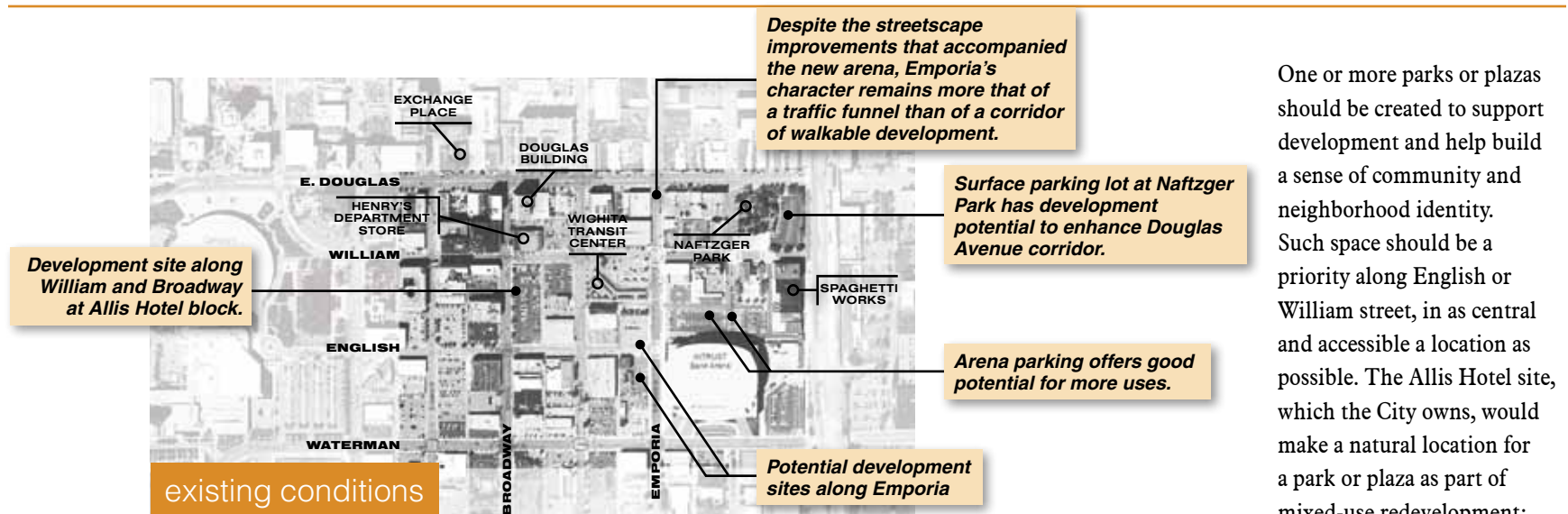
The Opportunity in The District



Today: Despite streetscape improvements introduced with the Arena, Emporia retains the character more of a traffic corridor than a place of walkable development.



Opportunity: New housing, office, retail, restaurant, entertainment and hotel uses—framing green, walkable streets—can work together to take advantage of the Arena district’s central location and influx of Arena visitors.



English Street should be a premier walking street in the Arena District, with an emphasis not on retail but rather on a landscaped promenade offering a beautiful green walk between the convention center and the Arena, and that serves as an attractive residential address. Plantings should be given special prominence along English, using distinctive street trees, continuous tree lawns with shrubs and flowers, and consistent planted setbacks 5 to 15 feet deep in front of buildings.

Recently installed street trees, lighting, sidewalks and crosswalks along Waterman have done much to make it more walkable, despite its character as a traffic corridor. Along with housing, auto-oriented commercial uses are appropriate along Waterman as long as they also support walkability with highly accessible and transparent main entrances along the sidewalk edge, parking located behind buildings, and no curb cuts other than at existing alleys.

be built as part of a private redevelopment project. In either case, prominence and accessibility mean more than size. Compact public spaces can be preferable, in fact, because they don't require many people to make them feel active, and because they can be easier to establish when site options are limited.

Better use could be made of the Wichita Transit hub and adjacent parking structure as resources that help make the Arena District a regional destination and an attractive place for development. Relocating regional bus services to the Wichita Transit hub and expanding Downtown circulator service from the hub would help transform the facility a from simple transfer point between buses to a significant Downtown gateway.

One or more parks or plazas should be created to support development and help build a sense of community and neighborhood identity. Such space should be a priority along English or William street, in as central and accessible a location as possible. The Allis Hotel site, which the City owns, would make a natural location for a park or plaza as part of mixed-use redevelopment; alternatively, park space might

community vision

The Allis Hotel site makes a natural location for a park or plaza as part of a mixed-use redevelopment. This amenity supports other development in the district and builds neighborhood community and identity.

English Street is a premiere walking street—not with an emphasis on retail but rather as a landscaped promenade that offers a beautiful green route between the convention center and arena, and an attractive residential address.

Auto-oriented commercial uses share Waterman with housing. Their design, however, supports walkability with highly accessible and transparent entrances along the sidewalk, parking located behind buildings, and no curb cuts beyond those at existing alleys.

Housing on or around the former Allis Hotel block complements Exchange Place and creates a critical mass of housing in the center of Downtown.

Regional transit services link to Downtown destinations thanks to convenient circulator transit, additional development, and more walkable streets adjacent to the Transit Center.

Sites adjoining the Naftzger Park block and the historic Spaghetti Works building offer great opportunity for retail, dining, entertainment, hotel and housing in the near and intermediate terms.

An enhanced walking environment with more pedestrian-oriented development at the Arena plaza attract more activity and enhance connectivity along St. Francis Street to the north.

Key Themes

- **Link Arena, Douglas and Old Town with active retail/entertainment and mixed-use redevelopment and rehabilitation.** As a first priority, focus retail, restaurant and entertainment development in rehabilitated or new buildings between the Arena and Douglas Avenue. Additional retail development can build off of this concentration along William and Emporia streets.
- **Enhance Naftzger Park and Arena plaza to attract more public activity.** These spaces, and the St. Francis and Commerce Street corridors connecting them today

function as prime walking corridors for Arena visitors moving to and from restaurants, transit, parking and other destinations to the north. Enhance the walking environment with more pedestrian-oriented development, particularly on parking lots, and additional streetscape enhancements like more street trees.

- **Expand housing and retail west along William and English.** Housing is encouraged anywhere in the district. It would be especially valuable on or around the former Allis Hotel block, complementing Exchange Place to solidify a critical mass of housing in

the center of Downtown. Stores and other active ground-floor uses are encouraged along William, complementing existing restaurants, to the extent they are market-supportable and do not significantly hamper recruitment of retail to Douglas Avenue. Walkable retail is encouraged along Waterman.

- **Make the Wichita Transit hub a district hub.** Link regional transit services to Downtown destinations with convenient circulator transit, plus additional development and more walkable streets adjacent to the hub.

Old Town South

Past and present come together around some of Downtown's grandest historic buildings—and sites with the most capacity for future development



District Overview

Distinct conditions mark different parts of Old Town South. Its Douglas Avenue edge clearly defines the south edge of Old Town. Here, Union Station, one of Downtown's most significant historic landmarks, helped jump-start Old Town's revival with its renovation into offices for Cox Communications in the 1980s. Now largely vacant as Cox

seeks to sell it, the property holds strong prospects for attracting new commercial uses and pushing Old Town's vibrancy south of Douglas. The historic Rock Island Depot, freight depot, and Grand Hotel adjacent to Union Station also offer important opportunities for re-occupancy with commercial tenants that can restore activity along Douglas.

Further south, Old Town South becomes much less visible and accessible, with a limited street grid relieved only by Waterman, whose connection west is important but compromised by a low railroad overpass. Commercial and industrial uses dominate, providing no welcome to Downtown at the important gateway along Washington from the Kellogg Avenue highway. Compared to other areas of Downtown, these areas have few qualities that could draw walkable development today. Yet they do represent an important long-term development opportunity as redevelopment elsewhere in Downtown builds market interest and claims other available sites. The Union Station parcel, in fact, offers a unique opportunity for any large tenant that wants to locate Downtown in the existing station structure and/or in new buildings—at 9 acres, the parcel is one of Downtown’s largest, and it includes significant unbuilt land south of the station building. The Waterman corridor has convenient walking access from the Commerce Street Arts District and thus could offer an important opportunity for additional low-cost arts and commercial space supporting growth of that district. Old Town South also has several historic buildings along Mead and Waterman streets with untapped potential for adaptive reuse that could combine historic tax credits and their own historic character to create development value.

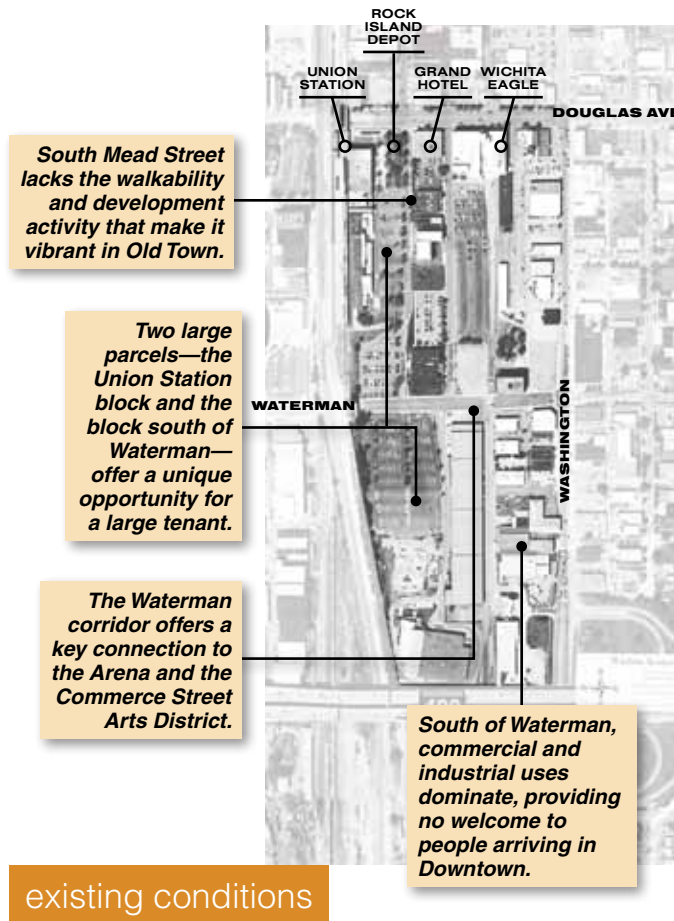
The Opportunity in The District



Today: South Mead lacks the walkability and development activity that makes it vibrant in Old Town north of Douglas.



Opportunity: A mix of uses in renovated historic buildings and new buildings of compatible character could make Old Town South a seamless extension of Old Town.



existing conditions

Key Themes

- **Revive Union Station, adjacent sites, and Douglas Avenue with office, hotel and/or other uses.** Union Station remains one of Downtown's most attractive settings for Class B office space. Its high visibility, accessibility and proximity to Old Town and the INTRUST Bank Arena also gives it—as well as the Rock Island Depot, freight depots and the Grand Hotel, collectively—good potential for hotel, retail, restaurant and entertainment uses, individually or combined. The broad brick drive in front of Union Station could serve as a public plaza enlivened by

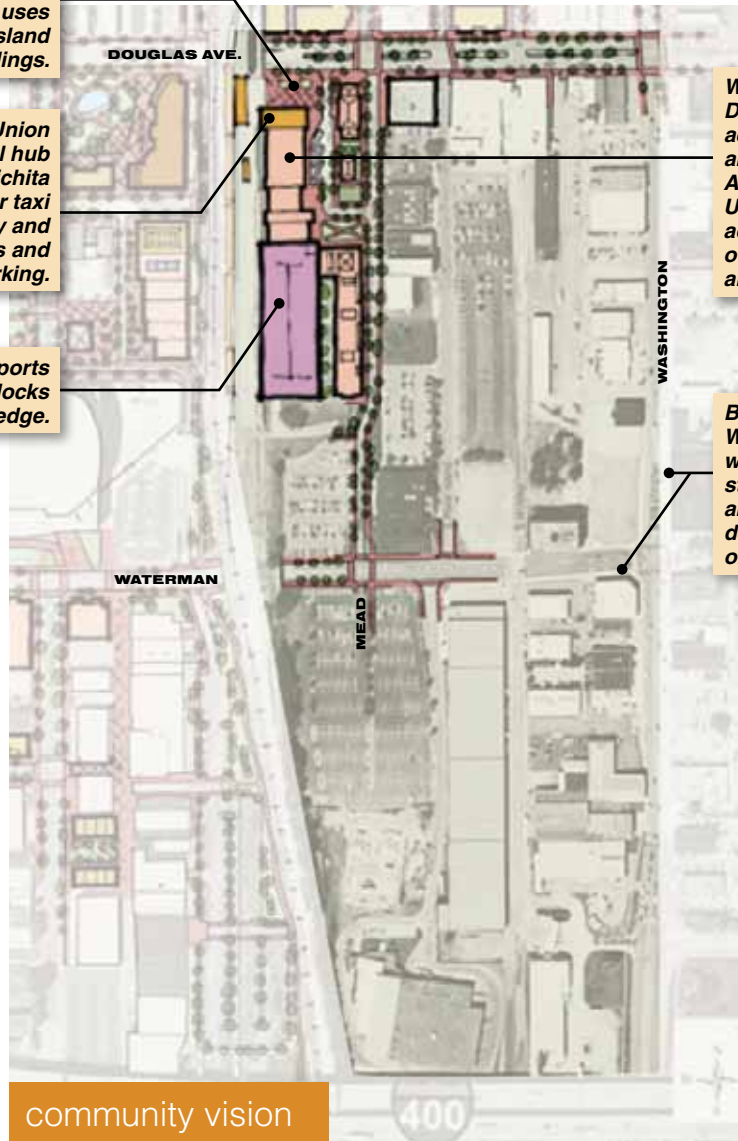
restaurants, outdoor dining and/or other active uses in the Union Station and Rock Island Depot buildings. Housing is also a possibility on upper floors of the Grand Hotel or in new buildings. Renovation of the Wichita Eagle's ground-floor frontage on Douglas Avenue would go a long way toward extending walkability east along Douglas from the Grand Hotel toward Washington Avenue and the Douglas Design District.

- **Add shared parking to support development on area blocks and the Douglas edge.** Old Town South offers important possible locations for new public structured parking that could enable more intensive redevelopment on vacant portions of the Union Station site and/or other nearby parcels, including the public parking lots along the north edge of Douglas. Parking lots south of Union Station and the Wichita Eagle have both sufficient size and accessibility to accommodate parking structures.
- **Create an intermodal transportation hub at Union Station.** Union Station has the potential to become a rail station once again if efforts by the State of Kansas and Northern Flyer Alliance confirm its feasibility. Any re-use of the building should allow for the possibility of reserving a prominent portion of the building facing Douglas Avenue to accommodate rail station facilities. With or without rail service, Union Station should also be considered a potential intermodal hub for Downtown circulator, Wichita Transit, regional bus and/or taxi services due to its accessibility and potential space for bus bays and public parking.
- **Prepare for longer-term redevelopment potential along Waterman Street and Washington Avenue.** Make both thoroughfares more walkable with more street trees, better crosswalks, and pedestrian-oriented design guidelines that apply to any new or renovated buildings. Adjacency to the Commerce Street Arts District and Douglas Avenue make both these corridors opportune places to extend Downtown's walkable street network.

The broad brick drive in front of Union Station serves as a public plaza enlivened by restaurants, outdoor dining and other active uses in the Union Station and Rock Island Depot buildings.

With or without rail service, Union Station serves as an intermodal hub for the Downtown circulator, Wichita Transit, and regional bus and/or taxi services due to its accessibility and space to accommodate bus bays and public parking.

Shared parking supports development on nearby blocks and the Douglas edge.



With high visibility on Douglas Avenue, good accessibility to Old Town and the INTRUST Bank Arena, a redeveloped Union Station and its adjacent parcels support offices, hotels, restaurants and/or other uses.

Both Waterman and Washington are more walkable, with improved street trees, crosswalks and pedestrian-oriented design guidelines for new or renovated buildings.

community vision

Commerce Street Arts

Pioneer artists and longtime businesses make this a center of creative energy and opportunity attracting workers, visitors and residents.



District Overview

Commerce Street Arts District demonstrates the classic qualities of arts districts that have revived areas of cities all over America. It continues to contain light industrial uses that give it a working character. It has galleries, workshops and other arts spaces created through years of committed effort by members of the arts community. It has become a regular destination for gallery crawls and other art events. Its informal character accommodates elements like utility wires and shared walking and driving areas that would be detriments elsewhere, and it celebrates creative art and architecture. It has recently attracted loft housing—such as the just-completed 25-unit

Finn Lofts and other projects under construction—that has sold quickly even in a tough market. Finally, its very success now threatens to gentrify the low-cost building space that attracted its art community in the first place, demanding pre-emptive efforts to maintain and build on its success.

The City has recognized the district's dynamism and fragility by initiating studies to create needed east-west connections between Commerce, St. Francis and Lewis streets, improve walkability throughout the district, and possibly add public parking and service access on the rail yard site east of Commerce. Project Downtown advocates supplementing

this with a more comprehensive area plan that provides a detailed, community-based blueprint for physical expansion of the district's mixed uses in a way that is sustainable from economic and community perspectives.

Key Themes

- **Encourage new housing, galleries, and supportive retail on multiple sites/blocks.** As Flats 324 demonstrated in Old Town West, new housing doesn't need to be contiguous with existing development to succeed. Additional housing and commercial uses that continue the spirit of the district should be encouraged on blocks extending west from Commerce toward Main Street, to help keep development costs reasonable and expand the catalytic influence of the district. Increasingly, the district will need to manage potential conflicts among uses through a strong district association that is broadly representative of property and business owners and tenants.
- **Grow along walkable Lewis and Emporia corridors.** Lewis Street offers a natural walkable spine that can extend the district west, offering a quieter and greener setting than Waterman Street. Its numerous vacant, developable sites can become a corridor of walkable development connecting to WaterWalk and the Arkansas River. Emporia Avenue is the district's most important north-south spine for the near future, with opportunity for walkable development stretching north to the Arena District and Douglas Avenue, and south below Kellogg to the residential blocks of South Central. Over the longer term, Broadway should also become a prime north-south walkable corridor as reinvestment patterns continue moving west.

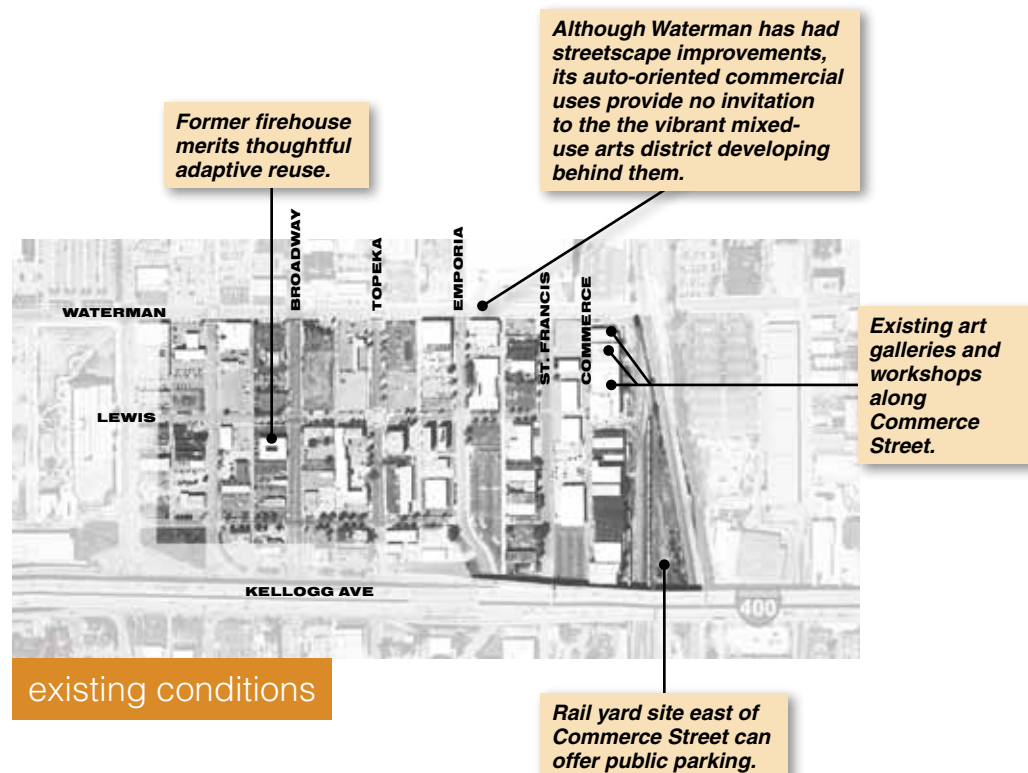
The Opportunity in The District



Today: Despite streetscape improvements, Waterman's auto-oriented commercial uses provide no invitation to the vibrant mixed-use arts district emerging behind them.



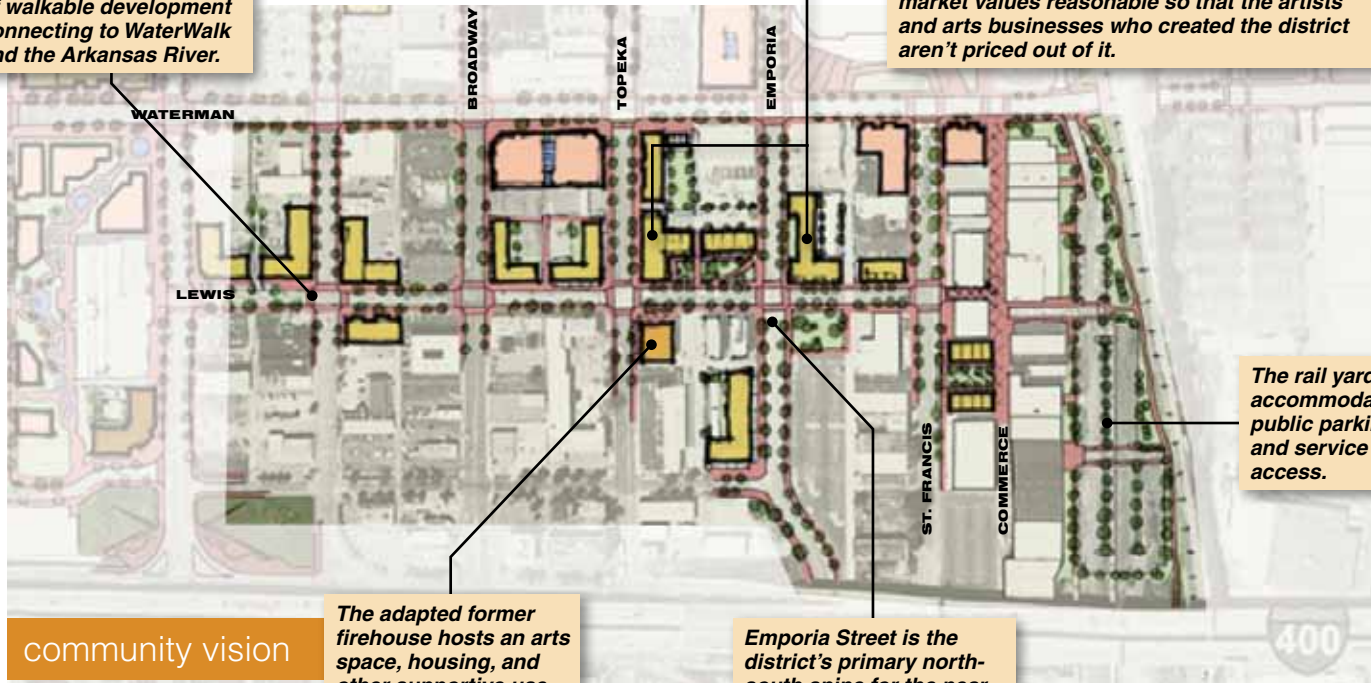
Opportunity: The district's informal feel could make it an appropriate place to mix modern architecture amidst older industrial architecture, reinforcing a unique, creative character.



- **Adapt the former firehouse as arts space, housing, or other supportive use.** The historic firehouse, which the City uses for offices and storage, is an architectural gem at the corner of Lewis and Topeka streets. The City should adapt the building and site with uses that support the Commerce Street Arts District and promote its growth. For instance, the firehouse garage bays could become distinctive gallery or retail space, and its upper floor could become affordable artist housing or studio space, anchoring a new center of energy and development in the district.

Lewis Street offers a quiet and green a corridor of walkable development connecting to WaterWalk and the Arkansas River.

New housing, galleries, and supportive retail on multiple sites and blocks extend west from Commerce Street toward Main, expanding the district's catalytic influence and helping keep market values reasonable so that the artists and arts businesses who created the district aren't priced out of it.



The rail yard site accommodates public parking and service access.

The adapted former firehouse hosts an arts space, housing, and other supportive use.

Emporia Street is the district's primary north-south spine for the near term, with the opportunity for walkable development linking north to the Arena District and Douglas Avenue, and south below Kellogg to the residential blocks of South Central.

community vision

Main Street Corridor

A vital concentration of jobs, civic destinations and housing reinforce each other along Downtown's busiest north-south street.



District Overview

Main Street complements Douglas Avenue as Downtown's premier north-south corridor. Its coherence as a corridor has suffered from decades of auto-oriented development that has left few blocks inviting to pedestrians; attrition of tenants from some of its older office buildings; and one-way traffic (except for the recent return to two directions between Douglas and Kellogg) whose greater speed and rush-hour nature limits retail potential.

Nevertheless, Main Street retains significant assets that offer important opportunities for the future. It is a major

employment corridor, home to Downtown's largest employers including Cargill, INTRUST Bank, the City and County. This concentration of employees makes it ready for expanded transit service that would benefit current workers and property owners as well as Downtown amenities and destinations they would like access to. It has major publicly-owned sites, some occupied, like City Hall; some with potential for re-occupancy with new uses, like the Central Library building; and some with the potential for new development, like the Century II parking lot at Waterman Street. This means the City, County and Go Wichita have

important leverage to encourage uses and architecture along Main that can make it a walkable, mixed-use street that functions as one of Downtown's most important economic generators. The conversion to two-way traffic south of Douglas Avenue has made wayfinding easier for people coming off of Kellogg; extending the two-way traffic north through Downtown, as the City is considering doing, would further improve wayfinding for drivers as well as make Main a better transit corridor.

Key Themes

- **Build on the significant employment base with a more walkable environment.** Add street trees and on-street parking to make a more comfortable walking environment. Add housing to keep the street active beyond office hours and help foster new retail that can draw support from daytime, evening and weekend demand. Encourage ground floors of buildings to invite walking through their design and use—making office lobbies and meeting spaces more open and accessible, adding retail where economically feasible.
- **Transform the area south of Douglas with actions on key sites: the Central Library, Century II, WaterWalk.** These blocks can be transformed for the better through coordinated actions on several sites to support walkable development. A new public parking structure on the city parking lot at William and Main could revive the Century Building as housing and support a prominent new hotel or office building complementing Century II. The current Central Library building, after the library moves

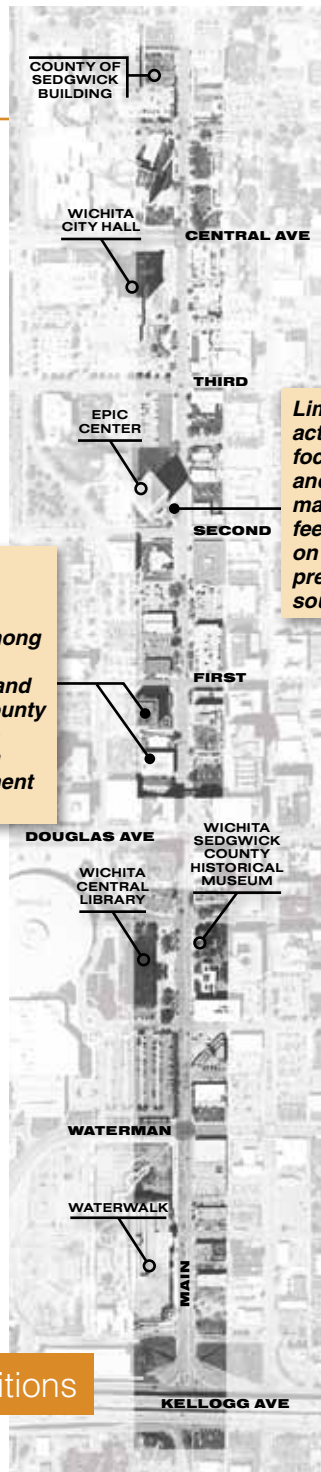
The Opportunity in The District



Today: Street and building design catering to cars make pedestrians feel unwelcome



Opportunity: Walkable development—incorporating a mix of housing and commercial uses—can strengthen Main Street's role as an economic generator by making it a dignified, active street.



With some of Downtown's biggest employers—among them Cargill, INTRUST Bank, and the City and County governments—Main Street is a major employment corridor.

Limited street-level activity, auto-focused building and street design make pedestrians feel unwelcome on Downtown's premier north-south spine.

existing conditions

to its new site, should be re-occupied with a use that fully leverages its prominence and dignity—potentially as an expansion of Century II's convention and/or arts facilities, potentially as the address of a major educational institution or office tenant. Century II's parking lot at Waterman is a key site that would enable potential expansion of the conference center with convention facilities and/or parking. In either case, care must be taken to create a pedestrian-oriented edge along Main, as parking and convention uses tend to create poor facades. Any expansion should be lined with ground-floor retail and possibly upper-story housing along the street. WaterWalk's prominent site for a future office building flanking a pedestrian plaza at Waterman Street can perfectly accommodate a new Class A office building in the 50,000-80,000sf range that was determined most feasible through the market analysis conducted as part of the Project Downtown master plan. The new Fairfield Inn at the southeast corner of WaterWalk is now enhancing the prominent Main Street gateway to Downtown from Kellogg.

- **Establish a transit corridor to link Government Center, Douglas Corridor, Century II and WaterWalk.**

Unlike many Downtown streets, Main Street is transit-ready—with a dense concentration of workers who have good opportunity to take advantage of improved transit service for commuting and for going out to lunch or conducting other Downtown errands. Adding transit will increase the value of existing real estate along Main, promote new development on infill sites through improved access and reduced parking needs, and provide a needed connection between WaterWalk and other Downtown areas.

community vision

main street north of douglas

A transit corridor links Government Center, Douglas Corridor, Century II and WaterWalk.

Improved streetscape and additional on-street parking make a more comfortable walking environment for pedestrians.

Building owners/developers have designed ground floors in ways that invite walking: office lobbies and meeting spaces are more open and accessible and retail exists where it's economically feasible.

After the Central Library relocates, new uses move in that take full advantage of its prominence and dignity—potentially an expansion of Century II convention and/or arts facilities, or a major educational institution or office user.

A new public parking structure on the city lot at William and Main helps revive the Century Building as housing and supports a prominent new hotel or office building that complements Century II.

The Century II parking lot at Waterman occupies a key site and enables the conference center to expand with convention facilities and/or a parking structure.

An office building occupies WaterWalk's prominent site flanking a pedestrian plaza at Waterman and Main, enhancing street activity and serving as a gateway to the area.

The new Fairfield Inn at the southeast corner of WaterWalk enhances the prominent Main Street gateway to Downtown from Kellogg.

community vision

main street south of douglas

Downtown Core

The traditional central business district brings people and their activities together around great address streets with convenient access by foot, car, transit and bicycle.



District Overview

In many ways the Downtown Core resembles the Main Street corridor (which it straddles), except that it is a district of gridded blocks, not a linear corridor. Its traditional role as the central business district means it still contains major employment centers, but it also has significant gaps where commercial development has left, and it shuts down after office hours. Several important Downtown streets in addition to Main weave together its blocks and create important address locations. Running north-south, Market represents another important office-address street and will have the important mixed-use enhancements of a new Downtown YMCA at

Central and the new Exchange Place housing at Douglas. Even more significant as an “address street” is Broadway—once the regional north-south highway and still a major transit route—with several churches, office buildings, and the Orpheum Theater, as well as the empty Henry’s department store and the site of the Allis Hotel, once Kansas’s tallest building, which was demolished in 1996. Running east-west, First Street extends east to Old Town and beyond, and west to the Arkansas River and Delano. First Street boasts a significant number of office buildings as well as the Orpheum Theatre a highlight of the street’s “String of Pearls.” Second Street forms

a one-way couplet with First Street, has some major office buildings, including the Epic Center, and connects directly to Old Town Square. Waco and Water streets complete the district's grid with more local connections to Douglas Avenue and the Government Center.

While vacant sites and underutilized buildings continue to impose gaps, the Core has seen significant reinvestment in recent years. The Garvey Center has become a true mixed-use block through gradual transformation of its former hotel tower into apartments with a long waiting list, and improvements in its office buildings. Real Development revived several aging office buildings with up-to-date communications and other amenities that helped win back tenants, and it plans to convert other obsolete office buildings into housing. Cargill is building a new 60,000sf research and innovation center on First Street, reinforcing its already strong Downtown presence and creating in effect a corporate campus that incorporates two existing buildings within a two-block area. The Core District remains a choice business location for the region due to its accessibility, availability of office space, and proximity to Century II, hotels and Old Town. Its growing role as a residential neighborhood will make it not only a great place to live, but an even better place to do business as new development increases street activity and strengthens support for retail.

Key Themes

- **Focus infill development around shared structured parking and walking/transit corridors.** Adding shared public parking structures in two or three locations would enable infill development on parking lots. This will

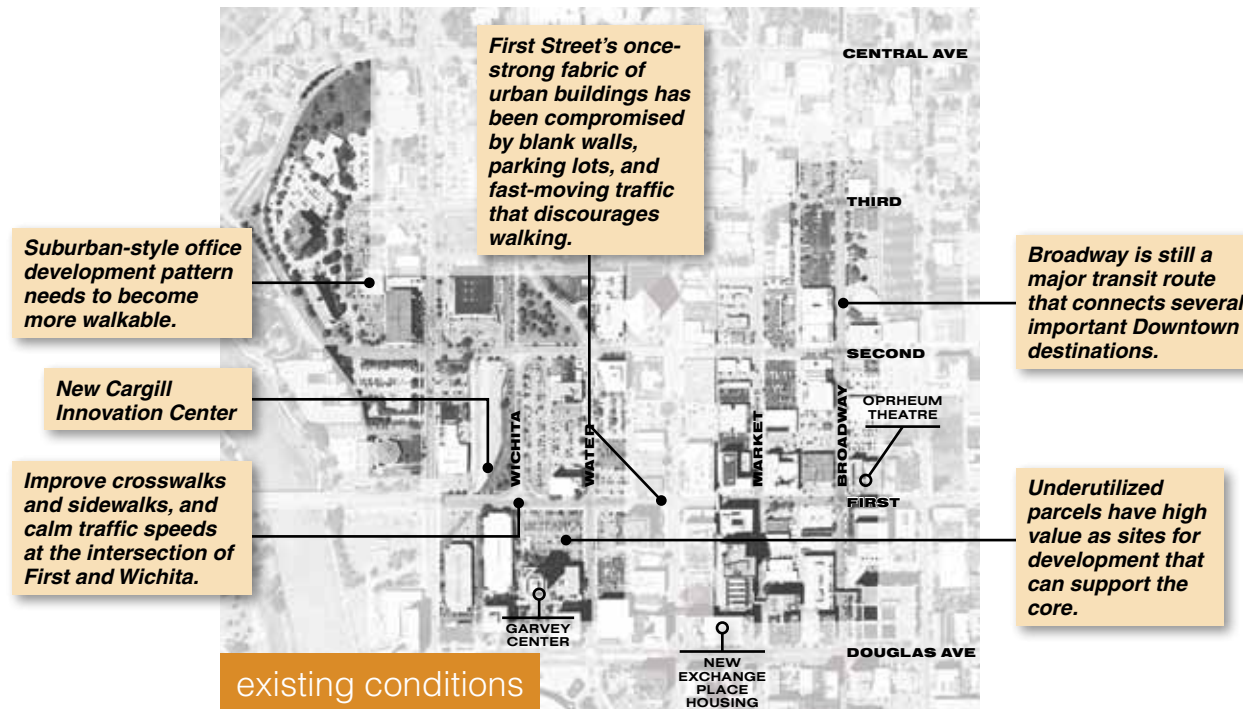
The Opportunity in The District



Today: First Street's once-strong fabric of urban buildings has been compromised with blank walls, parking lots and fast-moving traffic that discourage walking.



Opportunity: Focusing transit and walkability along Main, First and Second streets will make them desirable addresses for mixed-use development.



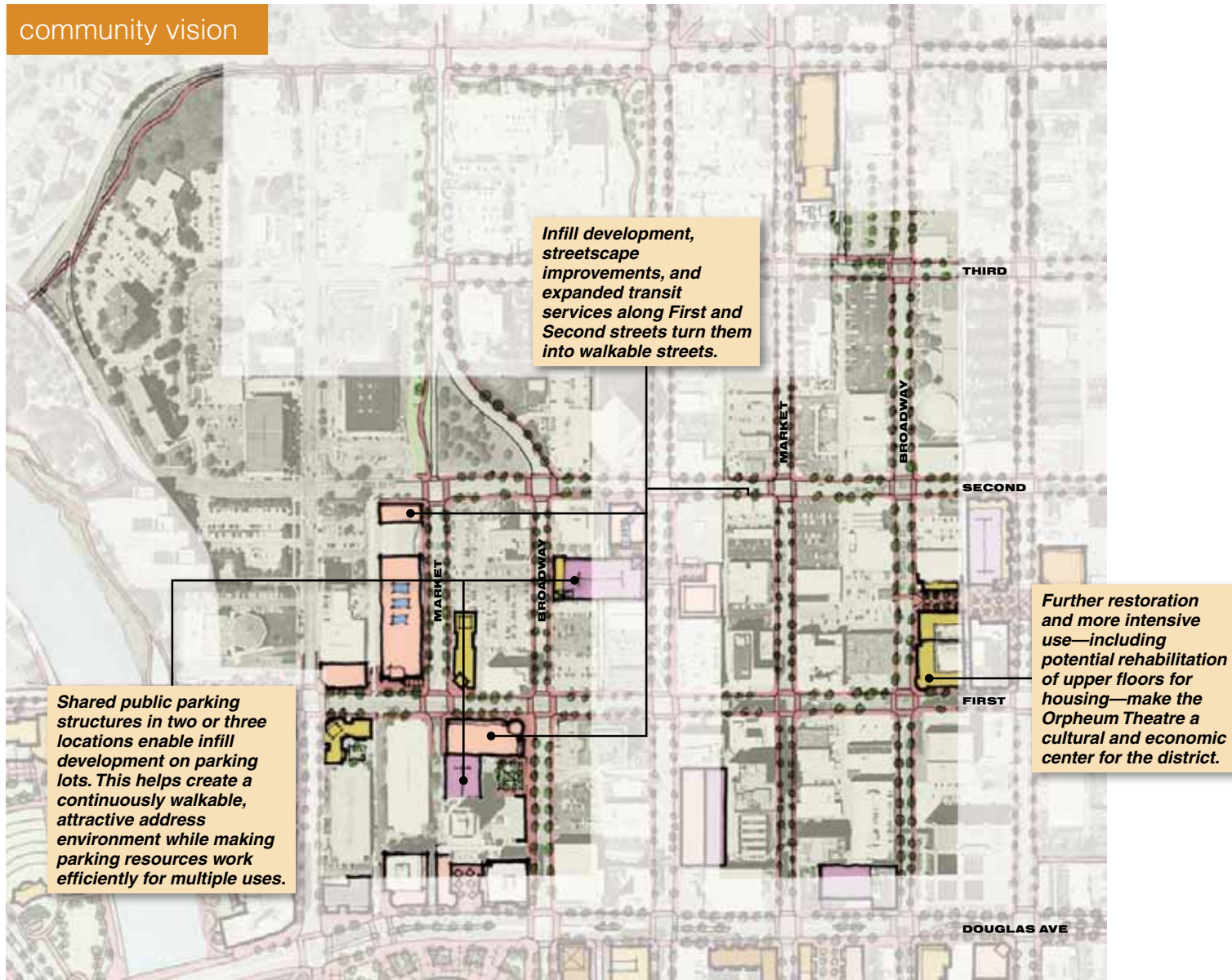
help create a continuously walkable, attractive address environment while making parking resources work more efficiently for multiple uses. It will also justify frequent transit service on Second, First, Main and Douglas, connecting the Core to the amenities all around it.

- **Celebrate the presence of historic buildings—while embracing compatible new architecture.** The district includes an eclectic mix of architecture. It is an especially appropriate place, then, to accommodate high-quality contemporary architecture that relates well to

historic context in its proportions and other characteristics. At the same time, historic jewels like the Orpheum deserve further restoration and more intensive use to make them cultural and economic centers for the district.

- **Reinforce Main, 1st, and 2nd Street corridors.** These corridors offer the best near-term prospects as walkable streets. To the extent possible, give priority to infill development, streetscape improvements and expanded transit services along them.

community vision



Century II-WaterWalk

The district of conventions, performing arts, dining, shopping and living that connects Downtown with its river.



District Overview

This onetime industrial area has been transformed by two generations of large-scale redevelopment. 1960s-era urban renewal created Century II, which along with the 1980s-era Bob Brown Convention Hall and 1990s Hyatt Hotel, has served a dual role as the region's major performing arts and convention center. WaterWalk was conceived around 2000 as a mixed-use center and now contains a major residential building, retail, office space and hotel, with significant mixed-use development potential yet untapped. Despite their success as destinations, each site has missed important opportunities to connect with the Downtown development context to the

east and the signature Arkansas River on the west. The main focus in this district should be to establish these connections as more intense development proceeds on each site.

Key Themes

- **Plan Century II's future.** Century II deserves a more specific and conclusive long-term development plan than has been completed to date. With its performing arts and convention facilities regularly pushed to maximum capacity, and frequent space conflicts arising among different uses, there is a clear need for more and better

facilities. Careful cost/benefit analysis of the economics of performing arts and/or convention center space must underlie any future investments. Plans must take into account a variety of factors—from the possibility of creating a new performing arts facility on First Street to the possibility of reusing today’s Central Library building, once the library completes its move, as convention event space. Any plans must also reintegrate the site into its Downtown context through walkable urban design and architecture.

- **Embrace the river edge with activities and access.** Both sites could do much more to make the river an asset. Century II’s loading dock and energy plant wall it off from the riverfront’s recreational path and park space. These should be replaced by reception halls, theater lobbies or other public spaces that celebrate expansive views and walking access to the river, making the beautiful setting one of the facility’s most important features. Recent renovations that improve orientation of the Hyatt lobby and restaurant to the river provide an excellent model for this. Possible northward expansion of the Hyatt could introduce more strong opportunities to orient interior space to the river edge. WaterWalk’s river frontage is largely occupied by the blank rear wall of the Gander Mountain store. As WaterWalk development proceeds, priority should be placed on the planned pedestrian walk/fountain connection to the river, and on introducing windows and potentially a restaurant facility into portions of the retail building. Gander Mountain could further take advantage of the river setting by using it to showcase its boating merchandise.

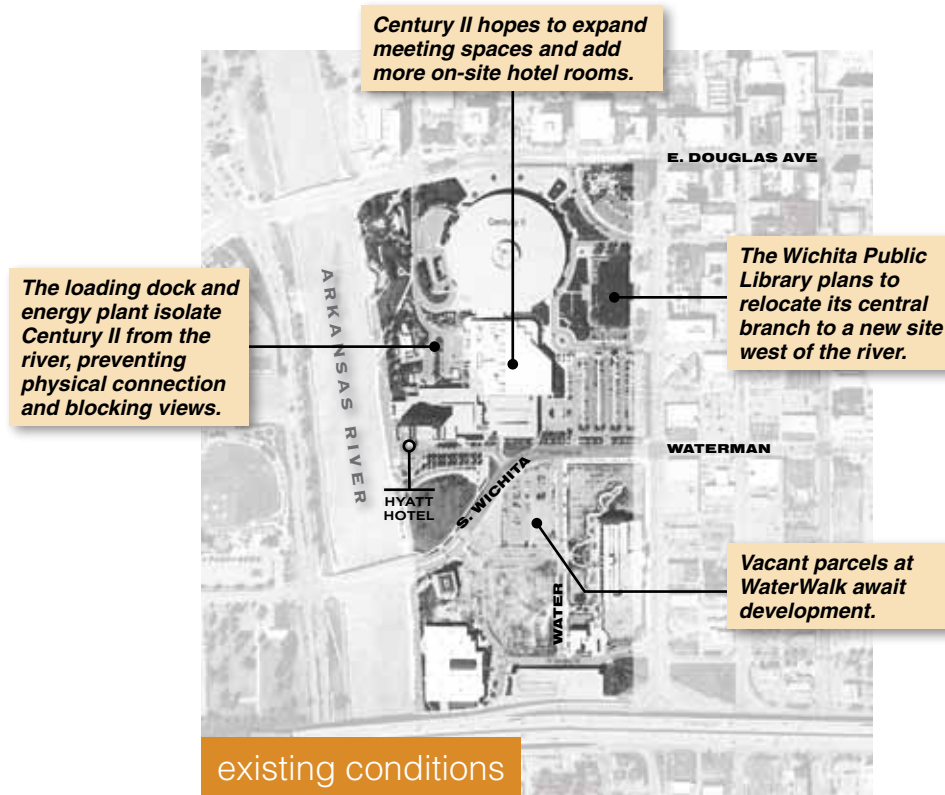
The Opportunity in The District



Today: Century II lacks strong connections to the Arkansas River or to Douglas Avenue.

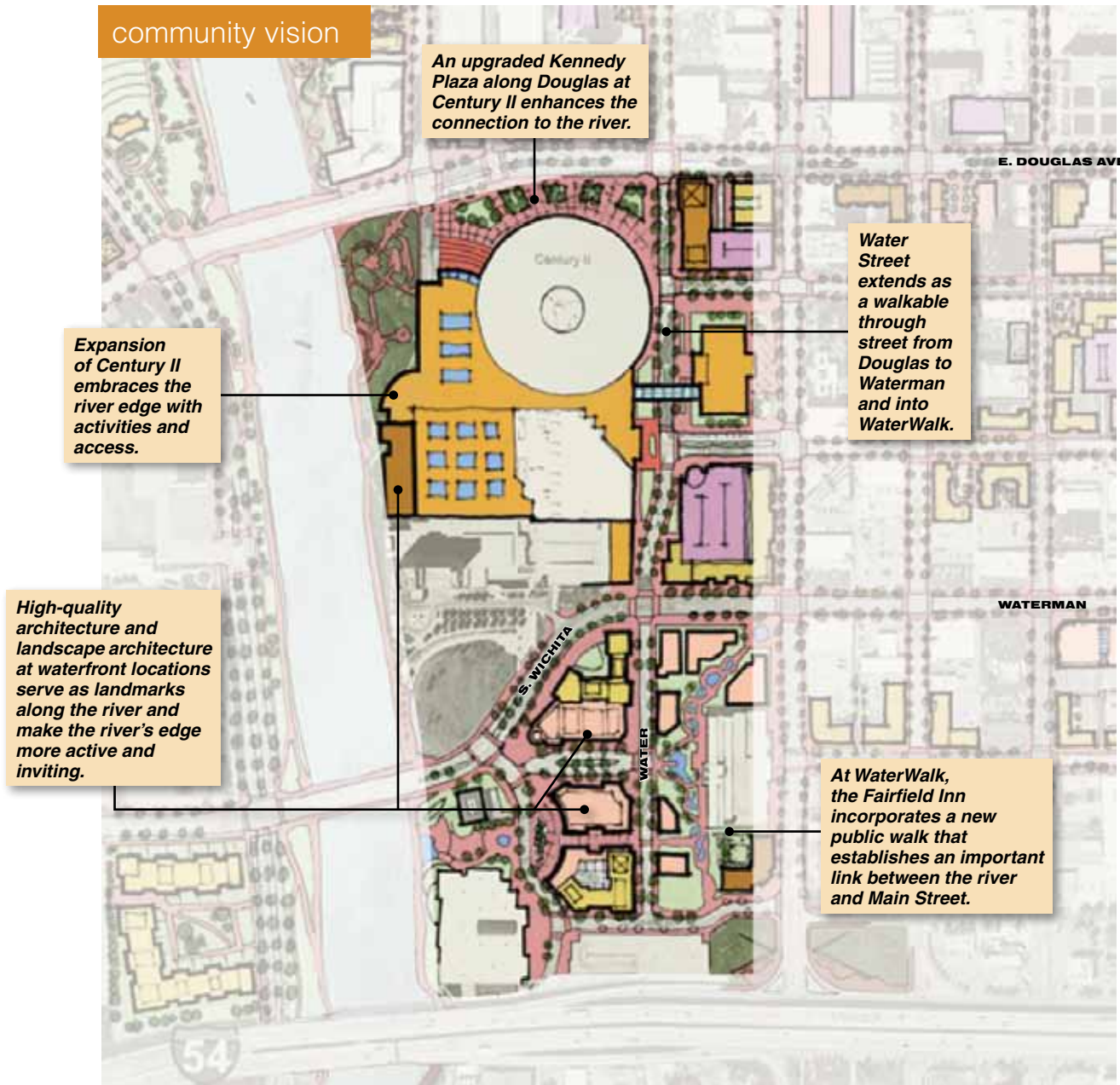


Opportunity: Pittsburgh’s convention center (middle photo) and a Hampton Inn in Greenville, SC (lower photo), embrace their river settings with extensive windows on gathering spaces, connections to public riverwalks, and distinctive architecture.



- Introduce walkable street connections across superblocks.** As improvements are made to Century II, priority should be placed on extending Water Street as a through, walkable street from Douglas to Waterman and right into WaterWalk. This would create an important missing connection between the Douglas corridor, Century II and WaterWalk, with particular value in establishing for convention visitors easy access to a variety of retail, dining and hotel choices on surrounding blocks. The Century II site should also create improved walking connections from Waco and Douglas to the river edge. At WaterWalk, the new Fairfield Inn is incorporating a public walk that creates an important walking link between the river and Main Street. Further development should include an extended pedestrian network, integrated with streets where possible, as anticipated in WaterWalk’s master plan.
- Create landmark architecture.** These sites’ waterfront location puts them in great places to be seen. Use high-quality architecture to reinforce the collection of great architecture along the Arkansas River District as well as to distinguish the new buildings themselves. Similarly, use high-quality landscape architecture to make the most of the river’s edge as a place for gathering, inviting local and regional communities as well as convention visitors to meet.

community vision



Government Center

This major center of employment and services, including the new flagship YMCA, gains a new level of access, civic identity and vitality from improved streets and recreation paths that invite walking, biking and using transit.



District Overview

Modest walking activity belies the fact that this district contains one of Downtown's principal concentrations of workers. City and County governments have an important opportunity to improve the walkability of their setting as they make needed space improvements, benefiting their workers as well as the public coming to use public services. The district offers a major opportunity to expand transit use because it is truly transit-ready: additional services can be justified today. This will benefit not only Government Center employees, but people and business and property owners along the balance

of the transit routes. The region's highly-regarded YMCA is planning to add an impressive new Downtown facility nearby at Central Avenue and Market Street. This will be an important amenity not only to Government Center workers, but to workers and residents throughout Downtown.

Key Themes

- **Major, growing employment center.** Sedgwick County will likely need to add office space as courts take more of its existing administration building.

Locate any added space (whether in a new or existing building) in a place that improves the character and walkability of the district—such as new buildings that fill in vacant lots along Main Street or Central Avenue. City Hall's setback from surrounding streets, meanwhile, diminishes walkability and downplays its pedestrian entrance. Extending portions of the building to the street, adding office space between the parking garage and Central, and/or programming and designing the planted setback more actively as park space would significantly improve connections between the building and its

larger setting. A joint site master plan should be created addressing both the City and County campuses to ensure all buildings and landscaping reinforce one another and the character of their surroundings.

- **Leverage YMCA, churches, other landmark institutions as key destinations.** The new YMCA will be an important Downtown destination and landmark at Market Street and Central Avenue. Make it convenient to walk to the new facility from government buildings and the Main and Douglas corridors by creating a continuous network of inviting, safe sidewalks and crosswalks. Encourage architecture that fits well into the context of historic church buildings—through compatible proportions, materials and other compositional features—while also expressing its own time and program.
- **Improve connectivity to the rest of Downtown and riverfront.** In particular, create convenient safe walking connections to and from the district along Main and Market streets and Central Avenue, and institute convenient circulator transit along Main Street. The district’s high concentration of employees, and the importance of the YMCA as a destination for people throughout Downtown, all contribute to making it “transit-ready.” Additionally, extend the recreational-path network, which now connects the railroad corridor and the Arkansas River, eastward to the YMCA to give its patrons easy recreational jogging, walking and bicycling access to regional path networks. Landscaped areas around City Hall could offer useful area for recreational path extensions.

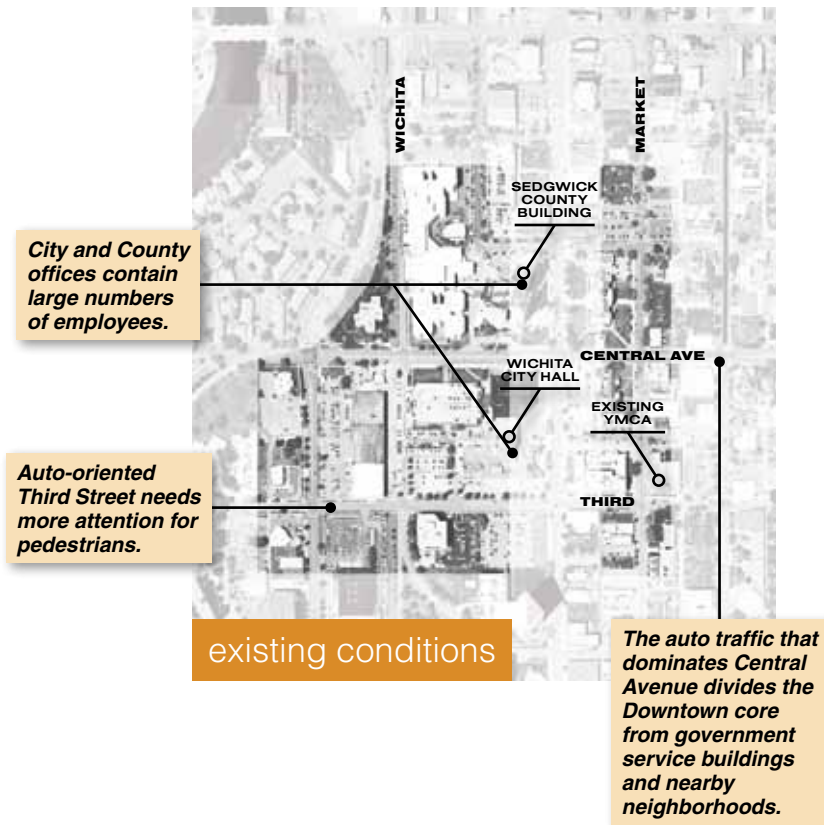
The Opportunity in The District



Today: Central Avenue is dominated by traffic that divides Downtown from government service buildings and adjacent neighborhoods.



Opportunity: Pedestrian-friendly landscape and building design, such as in this government-building campus in Clayton, Missouri, is an amenity for government employees, makes public facilities more welcoming and accessible to the public, and burnishes the image of both City and County.



- **Link to Renaissance Square and adjacent residential neighborhoods.** Government Center's employment base and the YMCA can provide important market support for new housing and retail in the Renaissance Square District and other nearby neighborhoods. Reinforce walking connections to these neighborhoods with improved sidewalks and crosswalks, and with guidelines that favor pedestrian-oriented development. Encourage employees to walk out of office buildings for lunch at neighborhood restaurants rather than eating at internal cafeterias.

community vision

A master plan prepared jointly for the City and County campuses has ensured that their buildings and landscaping reinforce one another and the character of their surroundings, resulting in improved character and walkability throughout the district.

The recreational paths connecting the railroad corridor and the river now extend eastward to the YMCA, opening easy jogging, walking and bicycling access to regional path networks.

Stronger walking connections to Renaissance Square and other nearby neighborhoods result from better sidewalks, improved crosswalks, and guidelines that encourage pedestrian-oriented development.

The new YMCA at Market Street and Central Avenue is a landmark and an important Downtown destination, within convenient walking distance of government buildings and the Main and Douglas corridors.

Renaissance Square

The vitality of Old Town, major hospital and government employment centers, and venerable Downtown churches shape this emerging neighborhood, which features a distinctive new park, new housing and retail.



District Overview

The existing Renaissance Square Plan sets a compelling vision for a neighborhood with many more residents, neighborhood shopping, and its own park. Market analysis suggests that such development may not receive strong market support in the near term relative to other Downtown locations, but that over the longer term it can benefit from market-driven development expanding up from Old Town West along the St. Francis and Emporia corridors. Redevelopment should be carefully oriented to Via Christi hospital, so that retail is supported by hospital-generated demand as well as neighborhood residents, and so that housing and transit

are convenient to the hospital workforce. The district's many churches are an important foundation of its sense of community and character.

Key Themes

- **Encourage walkable retail and riverfront connections complementing Via Christi hospital, Governmental Center, and other institutions.** Maintain the existing street grid, which provides important assets in terms of walkable connections and development addresses. Connect with walkable connections to the Little

Arkansas River, Government Center, Old Town West and other adjacent districts. Introduce transit along St. Francis Street linking the hospital and Renaissance Square to major destinations, including Old Town, INTRUST Bank Arena and Wichita Transit hub.

- **Infill housing opportunity.** Housing is Downtown's most significant market-driven development opportunity. The relative availability of large, vacant parcels here will help accommodate market demand. Housing is a more likely and more appropriate use here than commercial development, and it should be clustered in areas with a higher concentration of existing commercial and residential development and transit service. Churches may want to consider sponsoring housing development that addresses particular social goals such as affordability.
- **Create a park amenity.** Create a neighborhood park to add value to area housing and serve as a neighborhood destination that builds community. It is likely this park would be created from private land on an opportunistic basis. Remaining flexible about the location of the park will keep open the possibility of many good siting options. The park need not be large to be effective; avoid closing any street to create a park, as suggested in the Renaissance Square Plan.

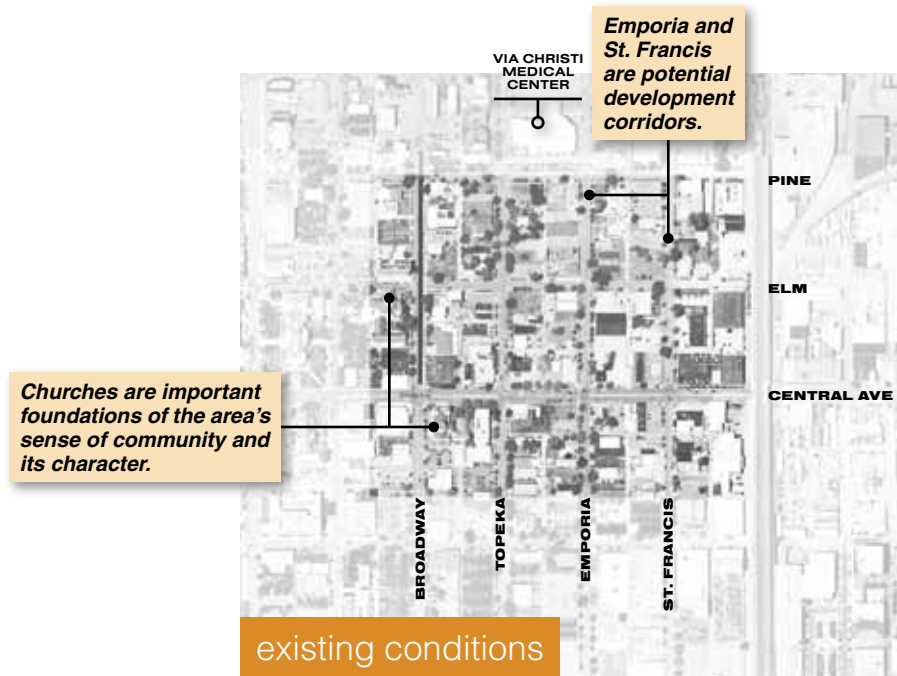
The Opportunity in The District



Today: Numerous parking lots separating buildings make Renaissance Square's dwellings and landmark churches feel disconnected from one another, from Downtown, and from Historic Midtown.



Opportunity: New housing and a concentration of neighborhood retail would help reinforce Renaissance Square's neighborhood identity and would provide important support to the major job centers of Via Christi Hospital and the Government Center with amenities and housing that could serve employees.



community vision

Creation of a neighborhood park adds value to housing and serves as a community-building destination within the neighborhood. Flexibility about siting keeps open as many good options as possible. Closing streets to create park space is strongly discouraged.

Walkable connections link Renaissance Square to the Little Arkansas River, Government Center, Old Town West and other adjacent districts.

Infill housing closes gaps along St. Francis, Emporia, and Central, major development and transit corridors.

Transit along St. Francis, links the hospital and Renaissance Square to major destinations, including Old Town, the INTRUST Bank Arena, and the Downtown Transit Center.